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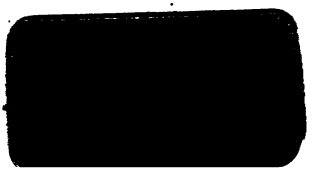

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He found his way blocked by a squad of the enemy

[*Page 24*]

THE YOUNG VIRGINIANS SERIES

WITH THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

BY
BYRON A. DUNN
Author of "The Young Kentuckians Series,"
"The Young Missourians Series"

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS
By J. Allen St. John

CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
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PREFACE

THIS volume takes Robert Hunter and Jim Kidder, the heroes of *The Boy Scouts of the Shenandoah*, into the bloody conflicts which were fought in Virginia in 1862 and 1863.

The year 1862 was a year of humiliation to The Army of the Potomac. The soldiers fought bravely, but owing to poor generalship, jealousy among the officers, and interference from Washington, suffered disastrous defeats.

During this period our boy scouts keep up their reputation for daring, and this daring leads them into numerous adventures.

As in the other books of the author, with the exception of the adventures of the boys and their friends, he keeps to the true facts of history as he sees it.

The publishers of these books have well said: "The youth of America should be familiar with the story of the great struggle of the early Sixties. Regrettable as this fratricidal war may have been, it can hardly be questioned that it brought about the unification of the nation."

That the young appreciate these books is shown by the welcome they have received. It has been the aim of the author not to teach the young the lure of battle — for he shows it in all its horrors — but to teach instead, patriotism, true bravery, and heroism.

WOR 19 FEB '36

Now that the clouds of war are again hanging over our beloved country it is the hope of the author that his books may have at least a small part in teaching the youth of the land a love for the flag which every true American boy should have.

"The Young Virginians Series" will be completed in one more volume, entitled, *Scouting for Sheridan.*

BYRON A. DUNN.

WAUKEGAN, ILLINOIS.

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With the Army of the Potomac

CHAPTER I

STARTING FOR RICHMOND

ON THE morning of June 20, 1862, a large steamer lay at the dock at Washington ready to start down the Potomac. Its deck swarmed with soldiers on their way to join the army under McClellan on the Peninsula.

For a month, the outposts of the Federal army had been within five miles of Richmond, and the whole country had been waiting with bated breath for McClellan to strike the blow which would give him the Confederate capital. But the weary days passed and no blow was struck.

Just before the boat started, a sturdy boy of seventeen or eighteen years of age attempted to come on board. He was dressed in a neat suit of dark blue, and had his left arm in a sling. His face was bronzed from exposure, and he would have been taken for a soldier had he not been in civilian clothes.

"Here, where do you think you are going?" asked a guard. "No civilian allowed on board without a pass. Get out of the way and let this officer pass."

He attempted to push the boy back with the butt of his musket.

The officer, a pompous red-faced major, growled, "Yes, get out of the way, and be quick about it."

The boy stood his ground and handing a paper to the guard said quietly, "I have a pass."

The guard looked at the paper and exclaimed, "This is some pass, boy! But I do not know the president's signature. It may be a forgery. The president is not in the habit of giving passes."

"What!" cried the major. "That boy has a pass signed by Lincoln? Let me see it. I know the president's signature. I would not be surprised if he were a spy and the pass forged. The city is full of spies."

With a smile the boy told the guard to show the major the pass.

The major taking the pass read:

Pass the bearer, Robert Hunter, Scout, anywhere within the Federal lines that he may wish to go.

A. LINCOLN, PRES.

The major looked as astonished as the guard. "That's Lincoln's signature all right," he exclaimed. "My boy, you must tell me how you came to get that pass."

Just then the captain of the boat appeared crying, "What are you fellows blocking the gangway for? All aboard! We are ready to start."

There was a rush to get on board, and in the crush Robert and the major were separated for which Robert was not sorry, as he had no desire to satisfy the curiosity of the officer.

Those who have read *The Boy Scouts of the Shenandoah*, will recognize in the bearer of the pass the boy who had so distinguished himself as a scout for the Union army in the mountains of Northern Virginia. Being severely wounded through the arm at Port Republic while carrying a dispatch from General Shields to General Fremont, he had obtained an indefinite leave of absence, and resolved to visit his brother who was an officer in the Federal army, and with McClellan before Richmond.

When he had reached Washington armed with the most flattering testimonials from the generals under whom he had served, he sought and obtained an interview with President Lincoln, and stated he wished a pass to visit his brother.

The president looked over his credentials and said, "I see you have performed very important services as a scout. I only wish we had more like you. We would not be in the dark as much as we are. I will give you a pass that will be good anywhere where the flag floats."

Writing the pass he gave it to Robert, saying, as he did so, with a sly twinkle in his eye, "If when you are down there on the Peninsula you will do a little scouting for McClellan and convince him he is not fighting half a million men I will be very much obliged."

Robert laughed and told him he would see what he could do. That interview with Lincoln was always a bright spot in Robert's memory.

There were a large number of officers on the boat who had been absent on sick leave or from other causes, and were now on their way to rejoin their

commands; among them was the major who had come in contact with Robert. He seemed to have a great deal to say and was always ready to express his opinion.

As the steamer came abreast of Mount Vernon, as if by common consent the officers uncovered and stood in silence as the boat passed the hallowed spot.

"The place looks neglected," remarked a colonel. "I wonder what Washington would think if he could rise from his grave and find that Virginia was trying to destroy the nation that he helped to found, and for which he risked his life and honor."

"Probably be a rebel with the rest of the Virginians," growled the major. "He was a rebel once, and for all we know he might be again. All the descendants of Virginians who were prominent in the Revolution are now rebels. The virus of state rights is in their veins, and poisons whatever love they ever had for the nation. Look at Lee."

"You slander the name of Washington," called the colonel excitedly. "The virus of state rights never entered the veins of Washington as it did those of Jefferson and Henry. Washington was for a nation with a big N, a strong centralized nation. He was with Hamilton. We can thank the doctrine of state rights as preached by Jefferson as being at the bottom of this damnable rebellion. If Jefferson were alive he might be a rebel, but Washington, never."

"Now you slander Jefferson," cried a captain. "Jefferson was one of the greatest statesmen this country ever saw, and was a true patriot, the author of the immortal Declaration of Independence."

"And the author of the Kentucky Resolutions of

1798," remarked the colonel dryly. If those resolutions had never been written this war would never have been."

"That is where you are wrong again," cried the captain. "It's the blamed nigger that has caused this war. Jefferson, though a slaveholder, saw the injustice and moved to make the Northwest Territory forever free. He was farsighted enough to see what trouble slavery might cause, and he hoped for its early abolishment. Jefferson would never have supported a war to perpetuate slavery."

"Let us let the dead rest," replied the colonel. "What do you think of prospects down on the Peninsula? Think McClellan will have Richmond before we get there?"

"Have nothing," yelled the major. "He is slower than molasses in January. He should have had it two months ago. I am afraid the jig is up. Just as we were leaving I heard a rumor that Jackson was on his way to reinforce Lee. If that is true I think McClellan will have to fight whether he wants to or not."

This led to a hot discussion as to the conduct of the war to which Robert was an interested listener. During a lull in the conversation the major caught sight of him.

"Here, young man, come here," he called. "You are the very one I want to see."

Then turning to the others he said, "Gentlemen, this young man has a remarkable pass, one given him by the president himself. It must have a history. I think if he will tell us how he came to get it, it will be more interesting than our discussion."

All eyes were focused on Robert who turned red and then stammered, "Really — gentlemen — there — there is nothing about it, only the president was kind enough to give it to me."

"Let them see it," said the major.

Robert reluctantly handed over the pass.

There were exclamations of surprise as it passed around.

"What did I tell you," said the major. "He must have done something to merit such a paper as that. Tell us something of your exploits. I see your arm is in a sling. Were you wounded?"

"Yes, at Port Republic," was the reply.

"That was where two brigades were cut up, was it not?" asked the colonel.

"Yes, it was an unfortunate affair," Robert replied.

"Wasn't it there Fremont thought he had Jackson cornered, but he escaped by a bridge that was not burned as ordered?" asked the colonel.

"It was."

"I would like to hear about it," said the colonel, and a crowd of officers who had gathered around seconded the request.

So Robert had to tell how he carried a dispatch from Shields to Fremont, and how through neglect to burn the bridge Jackson escaped and fell on Shields' two hapless brigades.

Robert told the story well, and he was listened to with breathless attention.

When he finished, the major fairly howled, "Whose fault was it that the bridge was not burned?"

"I do not know," replied Robert. "I only know

that Colonel Carroll had it in his possession for about an hour and a half. Better ask him."

"That's it! That's it!" cried the major, bringing his fist down heavily. "A criminal blunder, and no one to blame. I tell you, gentlemen, this war has been a series of blunders on our side from the beginning. We haven't a general worth shucks. It's an outrage."

"Better put you in command," cried a voice from the outskirts. A smile went around, but the major was not to be bluffed.

"I would hang myself if I could not do better than most of them," he retorted.

While the discussion was at its height Robert managed to slip away. He did not like to talk about himself, and during the rest of the voyage he tried to make himself as inconspicuous as possible. The officers soon forgot their talk in playing cards and Robert was left in peace.

McClellan's base of supplies was at White House on the Pamunkey River. This was reached by sailing up the York River and then a short distance up the Pamunkey. From White House a railroad led to Richmond. This railroad was in possession of McClellan and over it he drew the supplies for his army.

Little did Robert think when he saw the vast stores of military supplies at White House that in less than three days they would be in possession of the enemy, but he thought at the time that they were very lightly guarded.

Robert made the journey from White House to the army on a flat car loaded with bales of hay. For

company he had several high officers and they seemed to enjoy what they called their hay-rack ride.

The ride ended at Savage Station and here were piled enough rations to feed a hundred-thousand men, and ammunition for an army of that size.

Robert found his brother's regiment was in General Fitz-John Porter's corps, which was still on the left bank of the Chickahominy. It held the extreme right of the army and guarded its rear.

Robert had no trouble in locating the regiment, and to say that the colonel (for his brother had been promoted to such position) was surprised to see him was to express it mildly. He could hardly believe his eyes, and at first could only stare; then exclaimed, "Bob! Bob! Is it really you, and your arm in a sling?" In a moment he had Robert in his arms and was pressing him to his breast.

"Hold on, Clayt, don't hurt my arm," gasped Robert. "I am mighty glad to see you, and that eagle on your shoulder — how did you get it?"

"Not by bravery," laughed his brother. "The colonel got cold feet and resigned, so I naturally fell into his place. How about the arm, Bob?"

"Oh, it's most well. It's a little tap I got at Port Republic while carrying a dispatch to General Fremont. I thought while it was getting well I would take a lay-off and run down and see you."

"Glad to have you, if you will only keep out of danger. What's the news?"

"They say my old friend General Jackson is coming down to see you. If he does, you will know it."

"I have heard that rumor, but some say it is Washington he is after, and those fellows at Wash-

ington are so afraid of it that they won't send McDowell to reinforce us. McDowell not coming is a sad blow to McClellan."

"It looks as if McClellan had a big army," said Robert. "I believe I passed through a million men coming here."

His brother laughed. "Just about one-tenth that number, Bob," he replied. "McClellan thinks he hasn't nearly enough men; says the rebel army is nearly double his. I don't believe it, but if Jackson comes they may outnumber us greatly. Bob, I don't like the situation a bit. But we will talk about that later. As for Jackson coming, what are Fremont and McDowell doing?"

"Jackson will give them the slip as he gave Patterson the slip before Bull Run," replied Bob.

Here an orderly rode up and spoke to the colonel.

"Bob, I'll have to leave you now," said his brother, "but we'll have a long talk tonight."

That night in the colonel's tent they had their talk, but his brother first insisted on hearing Robert's story. When it was through he sighed and said, "Mistakes! Mistakes! Nothing but mistakes! The worst one was in not burning that bridge; but northern Virginia is not the only place where mistakes are being made. This campaign has been full of them. Bob, I hate to say it, but I have lost faith in McClellan, and I am not alone. Many of the officers share my feelings; but of course we can only talk of it among ourselves."

"Tell me what has happened," said Robert. "We expected that Richmond would be taken before this."

"It ought to have been," replied his brother.

"McClellan has organized one of the finest armies ever known on this continent, but his genius seems to end there. We were a month before Yorktown. It was slimly garrisoned. It should have been taken with a rush. The rebels held it as long as they wished and then evacuated.[1]

"Our first real fight was at Williamstown where Hooker's men were rushed on fortifications that could have been easily flanked, and were the next morning. In this affair our loss was over three thousand. It is said the rebel loss was not half of that. Now here for two months we have been along the Chickahominy, no nearer Richmond than we were two months ago. All this time the rebel force has been growing stronger; ours, if anything, weaker, for in these swamps many of our boys sicken and die.

"But if McClellan had no inclination to fight, Johnston had. On May 31 he struck us a savage blow at Fair Oaks or Seven Pines. The first blow fell on Casey's division of the Fourth Corps. After a gallant defense it was driven back in disorder and several cannon taken. For a mile and a half our troops fell back when they met Sumner and Heintzelman coming to their relief, and the enemy was checked. The next morning they were driven back, and all the lost ground recovered. Not only had their attempt been a failure, but their losses were heavy. Among the severely wounded was General Johnston. This battle was the bloodiest engagement

[1] When McClellan first landed on the Peninsula, Magruder, the Confederate general holding Yorktown, had only 9,000 men to guard a line fourteen miles long. Afterwards his force was doubled.

fought so far on the soil of Virginia, and the advantage was all with us.[1]

"The boys were greatly elated over the results of the battle, and McClellan should have followed it up; but since then he has done nothing, absolutely nothing."

"If Jackson is here, or is coming as they say," replied Bob, "McClellan will have to fight whether he wants to or not. Jackson don't wait, he strikes."

"Then you consider him one of the ablest Confederate generals?" asked his brother.

"One of the very ablest," was the answer. "What is more, let me warn you, when the blow is struck, it will strike here. Let's see, Lee is in command of the Confederates now?"

"Yes, and many consider him an abler general than Johnston," answered the colonel.

"Then you may as well prepare for hot work. I have noticed the situation of the army, and the attack will come on this corps."

"Well, Bob, let it come. I am tired of this inaction. We will give them the best we've got. We have a splendid corps. But it is getting late and we had better turn in. For aught we know the blow may come tomorrow. McClellan may have something on foot. We have orders to have the men up early, and be prepared for an emergency."

Robert occupied a cot in his brother's tent, but he could not sleep. What he had heard haunted his brain. Was the Peninsula campaign, on which so much hope had been placed, to prove a failure?

[1] The Confederate loss in the battle of Fair Oaks was 6,990; the Federal loss 5,031.

CHAPTER II

SEVEN DAYS

AS COLONEL HUNTER had said, since the Confederates had struck that savage blow at Fair Oaks and retired discomfited, there had been little fighting. McClellan kept calling for reinforcements, claiming the Confederate army was nearly double his own. Now he had given up hopes of receiving any more reinforcements, and was considering an aggressive movement.

All the Union army was across the Chickahominy with the exception of the Fifth Corps. It was the duty of this corps to guard the right flank and rear of the army. It was a strong corps numbering 25,000 men. Its commander was General Fitz-John Porter, one of McClellan's favorite generals.

The morning of June 25 dawned bright and clear. Robert was up early, but no earlier than the soldiers. The rumor had spread through the camp that McClellan was at last to move. The hateful monotony was to be broken.

Soon the booming of cannon from across the Chickahominy was heard.

"Reckon McClellan has concluded to commence business now I'm here," said Robert jokingly to his brother.

The colonel laughed. "If that is so, it's a pity you didn't come three months ago. But I do not

think McClellan intends any general engagement today. If he did we would have received different orders."

"It seems quite an engagement though," said Robert, as the sound of firing grew more continuous.

McClellan did not intend any general engagement that day. He wished to gain a position from which he said he was to advance the next day. In this he was successful. The enemy was driven back, and the position gained.[1]

The sound of battle died away and McClellan, satisfied that his object had been gained, rested to make preparations for the next day.

General Lee had no idea of letting McClellan force the battle. Jackson had come up, and the right wing of the Union army was to be crushed. All night long Lee had been moving his army to his left. Early in the morning Longstreet forced a passage over the Chickahominy, and flung his force on McCall's division, which held the front of Porter's corps at Mechanicsville.

The first sound of battle aroused the whole corps, and all was excitement. The struggle for Richmond had at last commenced in earnest.

"Bob, we are going to see hot times, and I want you to keep back," said his brother. "Don't let me see you near the front line. No more Bull Run capers. Stay back with that sore arm."

"How can I stay back when you are in danger?" cried Robert. "As for me, I have run more risks

[1] This engagement, called the battle of Oak Grove, was the commencement of the Seven Days' battle. The Federal loss was 626.

a hundred times than I will be in in this battle. My arm is about well. See, I have thrown away the sling. Clayt, let me be by your side. Let me go as your orderly."

"Bob, you promise to stay back or I will put you under guard," replied the colonel sternly. "Understand?"

Robert saw that his brother was in earnest, and knew that if he was placed under guard there would be no chance of his getting anywhere near the battle, so with a heavy heart he gave the promise.

"Remember," said his brother, "you are to keep clear out of danger. I have no objections to your helping with the wounded."

"Which means," thought Robert, "that I will be first-aid to the wounded, and be mighty near the front line."

Robert could not but look with pride at his brother as he mounted his horse and rode away at the head of his regiment. How soldierly he looked!

"Oh, if I could only be by his side!" thought Robert as the tears came to his eyes.

How bravely the men marched! There were no stragglers, no shirkers. The regiment moved forward with ranks closed up, with steps firm and true.

Already cannon were thundering; there was a crackling of musketry as of fire among dead branches.

The outposts were being driven in. The skirmishers came back on a run. Close behind them came the enemy. It looked as if a great wave was coming to engulf everything before it.

"Boys," cried Colonel Hunter, "the time has come for which we have all longed. I know every man will

do his duty. Don't fire until the command, and then aim true."

The men answered with a cheer. On came that great wave, closer, closer. The men began to get uneasy. Would they never get the command to fire. Closer rolled the wave! It seemed about to engulf them.

"Fire!"

Like a galvanic shock, the words thrilled the heart of every soldier. The Federal lines suddenly became a livid line of flame and smoke. A leaden hail smote the ranks of the enemy; they reeled, staggered, then gathered strength and came on. Again and again were they smote with that storm of lead. They wavered, halted, then turned and fled, and so demoralized were they that they charged no more on that part of the field.

Robert had kept as close to the rear of the regiment as possible to be faithful to his promise. He had secured a position that afforded him a tolerably good view of the field of battle. With beating heart he saw the serried ranks of the foe come on. Would the slender Federal line ever be able to withstand all of those thousands? Like the soldiers, he grew impatient. Would they never fire? Had fear palsied their hearts?

From where Robert stood it looked as if the wave of gray was about to roll over the Federal line. He gave a great groan. The cowards were going to give up without firing a shot.

Suddenly the Federal line blazed and the smoke obscured the field, but from that smoke there came the sound of crashing volleys of musketry. Soon

the rebel yell was heard no longer, and beyond the wall of flame and smoke he caught a glimpse of the enemy falling back in wild disorder. He swung his hat and cheered and cheered, until he could cheer no longer. But with his rejoicing was the bitter thought that he had had no share in the victory.

On other parts of the line the firing did not die away until dark, but everywhere the enemy had been repulsed with heavy loss.

No sooner had the firing ceased than Robert sought the regiment, and to his joy found his brother safe, and that the loss of the regiment had been slight.[1]

Not much over half of Porter's corps had been engaged, and great was the rejoicing that they had been able to repulse Longstreet's fierce charge with so small a loss. But their rejoicing was of short duration. Orders came for them to fall back. Their position could be flanked on the right, and Jackson was already swinging around and threatening their rear.

In the darkness of the night they gave up the field they had held so valiantly, and with heavy hearts fell back. In doing so they had to pass through their camp, which had been left with tents standing and knapsacks piled up. They never saw them more, they were to gladden the hearts of the Confederates.

The new position ran around Gaines's Mill in a semi-circle, both flanks protected by the river. Across the river in their rear were two good bridges over

[1] This battle, known as the battle of Mechanicsville, was remarkable for the difference in the loss of the two armies. The Confederate loss was nearly 8,000, while the Federal loss was only 361.

which reinforcements could be thrown at any time. The new position was a strong one, and the men were ready and eager for the battle.

Thousands of men cannot be moved in a moment, and it was noon before all of Porter's men were in position and three o'clock before the Confederates were ready to attack. Jackson had come up, and Lee had decided to hurl three-fourths of his entire army on Porter.

Even at this time McClellan's thoughts were on retreat, instead of victory. He was obsessed with the thought that he was fighting a gigantic army, and was whipped at the very commencement of the battle.

"Bob, this is a strong position," cried Colonel Hunter, "and we ought to hold it, and will if McClellan will reinforce us. My opinion is that Lee will hurl almost his entire army on us. What we had yesterday will be nothing to what we will get today. I want you to keep back as you did yesterday. Better cross the river."

"Clayt, I can't promise that," replied Robert. "I felt like a miserable coward all day yesterday. I know I cannot do much, but if I keep near you, an opportunity may occur in which I may be of use. No I will not go across the river, but I promise I will not rush into danger; only a fool does that. I want to keep as close to the line as prudence dictates. If you are not satisfied with that why arrest me."

The colonel looked at him for a moment and then said, "I suppose I will have to be satisfied with that. I do not wish to put you under arrest, but do be careful."

Then coming close to Robert he said in a low voice, "Bob, I am afraid that McClellan is already contemplating a retreat to the James. If he is, he will not send us sufficient reinforcements to hold this line. He will sacrifice this corps, if necessary, to save the rest of the army. If the break comes, get back across the river."

"I shall surely take care of myself," replied Robert. "I have no great desire to fall into the hands of Jackson. But, Clayt, I will feel like shooting McClellan if he does not send you enough reinforcements to hold this line. It was mighty quiet across the river yesterday, and so far today."

Bob had no chance to say more as a scattering fire was heard in front.

"They are driving in our skirmishers," said the colonel. "It will soon be hot enough here. Get back, Bob, and God bless you. If I fall, you know everything is fixed, so you will have no trouble with the property."

Robert went back with reluctant feet. Why could he not stay? He could fight in the ranks and make one more. He did not go back far. Finding the best position possible, he took his post by a tree, and waited for the battle to open. He did not have long to wait. Determined to crush the Union forces at the outset, Longstreet hurled his troops in heavy masses on the Union line. A hundred cannon roared and one hundred thousand muskets blazed. Everywhere the Union lines held firm. Again and again the foe came on with added numbers only to be hurled back.

Robert had a field glass and through it he watched

the conflict. Through the smoke he could catch sight of horsemen dashing here and there and of bodies of troops rushing to some threatened point. Above all was the roar and thunder of the battle.

The rear was little better than the front. Excited men were running here and there. Ambulances were coming for their precious freight of mangled humanity. Heavy ammunition wagons would come up and dump their loads on the ground and go tearing back for more.

Now a thin line of wounded came straggling back, some using guns for crutches, others with bleeding, broken arms. Some would stagger back, fall, rise, and fall again to rise no more. Here and there among them would be a soldier with face blanched with fear, gun gone, everything that could impede his flight thrown away.

Robert hardly noticed these things so intent was he in watching the battle. A cannon ball crashed through the top of the tree by which he was standing. Shells began to burst around him, and there was a wild rush of ambulances, wagons, and stragglers to the rear, yet Robert's eyes were glued on that first line enveloped in smoke. Would it hold? Would it hold?

Reinforcements came rushing over the bridge and mingled in the fray. Thank God, McClellan was heeding! but why did not more come? Could he not see Porter was fighting Lee's whole army?

As Robert watched, his heart throbbed with excitement, his blood coursed through his veins like fire. Why, why was he not helping?

The wounded were now streaming back in ghastly

numbers. A huge tree limb torn off by a shell came crashing by his side, a branch of it knocking off his hat. He picked it up, and replaced it on his head unconscious he had been in danger.

Two soldiers came running back without guns. "The cowards," he muttered, and he reached for his revolver. He would shoot them if they did not halt. He was hardly human any more; he was crazed with the fire of battle.

"Cowards!" he shouted as they reached him. "Cowards! go back and fight like men, or I will shoot you."

They looked at him in surprise, and then one of them wiping the perspiration from his face with his sleeve snarled, "Don't get too fresh, young man. What are you doing here? Go up there yourself. We are not running away, we are after ammunition. We must have it before they charge again or all is lost. Lord, how they come!"

"A thousand pardons!" cried Robert. "There!" he pointed a short distance away to where a load of ammunition had been dumped.

The soldiers rushed to it. Each swung a box on his shoulder and started back on the run. They had gone only a short distance when a shell exploded in their faces and they fell. Robert saw they did not rise.

"They said the troops were without ammunition, and they must have ammunition or all would be lost," murmured Robert; and without further thought he dashed forward. Coming to where the men fell, he seized one of the boxes and swinging it to his shoulder, ran on.

Shells burst around him, Minie balls with their angry hiss flew past, but on he ran unscathed. Before him he saw his brother directing the firing of his men, who were crouched behind some logs which formed a rude breastwork.

Just as Robert reached his brother a captain rushed up and cried, "Colonel, haven't they come back with that ammunition? My men are out and the rebels are forming again."

Before Colonel Hunter could answer Robert, panting, threw down the box saying, "There is one box. The men you sent were killed. Send a couple of men with me and we will get more, I know where it is."

The colonel cried, "You, Robert, you here!"

"Yes, have I done wrong in coming?"

"Wrong, Robert, wrong! God bless you! You have saved us."

"Then give me a couple of men and I will get more."

The men were given and they made the journey in safety. How the men cheered them, and how quickly the cartridge boxes were replenished, just in time to repulse another furious charge.

An aide dashed up. "Colonel Hunter," he exclaimed saluting, "General Fletcher is killed, and Colonel Blood has just been severely wounded, as the senior colonel left, you must assume command of the brigade."

Hardly were the words spoken, when the aide plunged to the ground, shot through the head.

"This is unfortunate," said the colonel, "now I have no aide, not so much as an orderly."

"Let me be your orderly," cried Robert, springing

to the horse of the dead aide. "My clothes are blue, and in the smoke of battle the absence of military trimming will not be noticed."

Colonel Hunter bowed assent, his heart too full to utter a word.

There was no time to lose, as the enemy was again charging. From now on Robert was busy carrying orders, riding here and there amid the thick of the battle. He saw how thin the line was growing, and prayed for night to come. Not only was the line thin, but the soldiers were having difficulty in loading their guns. The fire had been so rapid that the guns had become foul and the balls would stick. In their desperation the men would use their guns as battering rams, driving the ends of their ramrods against trees to force the balls down. This made loading much slower, and greatly diminished the rapidity of the fire.

"How is the left of the line holding?" asked Colonel Hunter as Robert came back from delivering an order.

"Steady yet, but the line is growing very thin and the boys are having difficulty in loading their guns."

"Yes, I know," replied the colonel, "but if we can only hold out half an hour longer night will be here."

"I doubt if the line can stand another fierce charge," said Robert. "Why don't McClellan send reinforcements? There are thousands and thousands of men over the river standing idle. Can't he see that if we are defeated he may lose the whole army?"

"McClellan has already sent ten thousand men,"

replied his brother, "and he will send no more. He is afraid he will weaken his army on the other side too much."

Robert looked his disgust, but said no more.

General Lee thought by throwing the mass of his troops on Porter he could crush the corps and thus gain the rear of the Union army. He well knew the caution of McClellan, and believed he would not withdraw the bulk of his troops from the right bank of the Chickahominy to aid Porter.

As night drew near, and it was reported that Generals Longstreet and Jackson had failed to pierce the Union line, and that the losses were enormous, Lee grew anxious. He saw that instead of a glorious victory, his most cherished plan was to fail. Hastily writing an order, he handed it to an aide saying, "Ride as for your life, and deliver this to General Longstreet."

The order was delivered to General Longstreet and as he read it his grim face grew grimmer. It read:

If you cannot do something the day is lost.[1]

Longstreet rallied his broken columns for one last grand effort. He had one brigade that so far had not been severely engaged, and at this moment, as if led by Fate, two brigades from Jackson's corps came upon the scene, comparatively fresh. Quickly Longstreet put them in the assaulting columns. Not a single regiment of fresh troops did Porter have to oppose them.

[1] See General Longstreet's *From Manassas to Appomattox*, p. 127. J. B. Lippincott Company.

Oh, if McClellan had only known how near victory he was! He had four corps on the right bank of the Chickahominy, and from these he had only sent ten thousand men. At least sixty thousand men were standing comparatively idle, while their comrades were engaged in their death grapple with the bulk of Lee's army. Ten thousand fresh troops would have saved the day, but McClellan was not thinking of victory, but of retreat.

Longstreet's columns formed, he launched them forward with all the force of an irresistible torrent. Again the darkening woods roared with the thunder of battle. In vain the thin ranks tried to stem that torrent. A regiment on the left of Colonel Hunter gave way, then another and another. The men were fleeing through the woods in the wildest confusion.

"Stand firm, men! Stand firm!" shouted Colonel Hunter. Through the break the Confederates poured and pressed in front and on flank. Colonel Hunter saw he must retreat or have his whole brigade captured. Reluctantly he gave the order and succeeded in bringing his brigade off in tolerably good order.

When the retreat came, Robert was one of the last to leave. He had lingered too long and he found his way blocked by a squad of the enemy, who ordered him to surrender. He drove his rowels into his steed, and the horse sprang forward. So unexpected was the movement that two of the soldiers were ridden down before they had time to raise their guns. A third fired, but in his haste missed. Bending low over his horse Robert escaped amid a shower of balls.

When he came up to the brigade Colonel Hunter

grasped his hand saying, "Thank God, you are safe! I had given you up for lost."

Only the darkness saved the whole corps from being captured. There was a rush for the bridges, and hundreds took to the woods which lined the bank of the Chickahominy. Most of these were captured the next day. As it was, nearly three thousand of the corps were taken prisoners.[1]

The morning of June 28 developed a curious situation. The remnant of Porter's corps was across the Chickahominy. The bulk of Lee's army was on the left bank of the river. After Porter's corps had crossed the river, the bridges across the Chickahominy were broken down and Lee had no way of uniting his army but by repairing the bridges or making a circuitous march up the stream. McClellan's army lay squarely between the bulk of Lee's army and Richmond.

Two things were open for McClellan to do — either attack Richmond or retreat to the James. Some of his generals were eager to attack Richmond, but McClellan had already made up his mind to retreat, and gave orders to that effect.

Robert never forgot that retreat. The army fought by day and retreated by night. All day long the cannon would thunder and musketry rattle, only to die away when darkness came.

[1] The rout of Porter's corps was not the only mishap which befell McClellan that day. General Stuart with a mere handful of cavalry raided the rear and with scarcely any opposition captured the railroad and McClellan's base of supplies at White House. Millions of dollars worth of supplies were given to the flames.

Everywhere the rush of the Confederates was stopped, and the ground held until the time came for the retreat.

The amount of property destroyed was immense. The railroad bridge over the Chickahominy was broken down and great trains of cars drawn by engines without engineers were sent on their way to destruction, plunging into the muddy depth of the river. Everything that could not be loaded in the wagons was destroyed. At Savage Station a hospital in which were twenty-five hundred sick and wounded soldiers, was left to the tender mercies of the enemy.

McClellan, by skillful movement, managed to save his train, which if extended in a single line would have made a line forty miles long.[1]

At Glendale was fought the severest battle during the retreat. The Confederates had repaired the bridges and now with a united army attacked with the utmost vigor. McCall's division was broken and shattered and fled in confusion. "Fighting Joe" Hooker rushed his division to the rescue, met the exultant foe, and hurled them back with terrible slaughter. But many of McCall's men had been taken prisoners, among them the general himself. Night closed the conflict, with the Confederates being repulsed along the entire line.

It seems that in this battle McClellan gave the corps commanders no order whatever as to whether they should hold the ground or retreat. The battle was fought under the command of General Sumner.[2]

[1] Most military critics agree that as far as the retreat was concerned McClellan managed with consummate skill.

[2] General Franklin says that, without orders, he concluded

The forenoon of July 1 found the whole Federal army massed on Malvern Hill, the James at their back. For the first time the corps was united.

During the retreat Colonel Hunter's brigade, owing to its tremendous losses at Gaines's Mill, was not required to take part in the defense, but at Malvern Hill they held a point, which proved to be one of the most important and fiercely contested on the field.

As if enraged at the thought that the Federals had escaped, Lee determined to make one last desperate effort, and massing his whole army he hurled it with fury on the Federal position. As they advanced, cannon tore great rents in their ranks, but they closed up and came on again. When they were within range of the musketry they were smote with a leaden hail, but they bowed their heads as if facing a mighty wind and came on. At last it became more than flesh and blood could stand and they turned and fled down the hill, but only to rally and come again and again.

In front of Colonel Hunter's brigade the fighting was terrific. Here the foe refused to stop and came on until they could almost lay their hands on the mouths of the cannon. The colonel shouted, "Give them the bayonet."

The men sprang forward, but the enemy retreated before that line of gleaming steel reached them, and fled down the hill.

to withdraw his corps, and did so at nine o'clock. General Heintzelman says that, finding Franklin gone, he also concluded to withdraw without orders. This left Sumner's corps facing the enemy alone and without orders. That grim old warrior then concluded to withdraw also.

"Glorious!" shouted Robert. His horse had been shot, and in his wild enthusiasm he had charged with the men.

The line was ordered to return to its first position, but Robert had caught sight of a Confederate flag lying on the ground some fifty yards in front. The bearer lay dead beside it but his lifeless hands still grasped the staff, as if loath to give it up.

Without a moment's thought Robert started for the flag. He had no idea he was doing a brave or unusual act. He only thought it would be fine to get the flag, and present it to his brother.

He had covered about half the distance when he heard the men calling, "Come back! Come back, you fool!"

But Robert ran on, reached the flag, tore it from the stiffening hands and rushed back through a shower of balls.

When he presented it to his brother, to his surprise instead of being praised he received a severe rebuke.

"Robert," he said, "you may think you have done a brave and praiseworthy act, but instead you have done a very foolish one. Brave men do not expose their lives foolishly. If you had captured that flag from the hands of live men, fighting desperately to defend it, it would be different. That flag could have been easily picked up after the battle is over. The volley the enemy fired at you wounded two men."

With startled eyes Robert gazed on the flag, then flung it on the ground, and turned away sobbing.

"Colonel," said a major standing near, "you were too hard on the boy. What he did was done under the wild impulse of youth."

"Robert," said the colonel more gently, "get another horse. I have need of you."

There was no time for more as the enemy was again advancing. This time they were more easily repulsed.

The fight raged until along in the night, then the enemy, repulsed at every point, sullenly withdrew to the fortifications around Richmond.

The Federal victory had been a signal one, and great was the rejoicing in the army. The men fully expected that McClellan would follow up his victory in the morning, but to their surprise, and the consternation of most of the officers, orders came to retreat.

Many an officer swore. They saw no reason for retreat. They were on the James; the river was open; the gunboats were there.

Leaving the dead on the field as if the army had been defeated, instead of victorious, they once more took up the weary march. It was not until they reached Harrison Landing that they rested.

For seven days they had been in the furnace of battle, for seven days they had fought and then retreated. Only at Gaines's Mill, when overpowered by numbers, had their lines been broken. They had been defeated, but not conquered. Their hearts were still strong. They had done all that soldiers could do.

When McClellan rode down the lines at Harrison Landing he was wildly cheered. The soldiers still had confidence in "Little Mac" as he was called. But one brigade stood in respectful silence when he passed, not a cheer was heard. Their hearts were

too heavy, for that brigade had lost two-thirds of its number.[1]

[1] The Federal army before Richmond numbered at least 100,000. On June 20, five days before the battle opened, McClellan reported the number of men and officers present for duty at 109,000. The loss in the seven days fight was 15,849, of which nearly 6,000 were prisoners; so, in killed and wounded, McClellan did not lose quite 10,000.

On the Confederate side it is hard to get at the true facts as to numbers. On April 20, General Johnston reported about 60,000. From that time the Confederates received numerous reinforcements, and the coming of Jackson added at least 20,000. In all probability the two forces which struggled along the Chickahominy were nearly equal in numbers. But when it comes to the loss there is a big difference. Longstreet says that in the absence of complete returns it would be fair to put the Confederate loss at 18,000 or 19,000. But the author has gone over the reports carefully, and finds the Confederates to have lost 21,594. There were less than 1,000 Confederate prisoners taken, making the loss in killed and wounded more than double that of the Federals. This shows with what bravery and desperation the Confederates charged.

CHAPTER III

ROBERT WINS A BATTLE

"GENERAL, I believe I shall resign my position as Chief Lounger and Critic of Military Affairs on the Peninsula," said Robert.

He was reclining on a cot beneath a fly stretched before his brother's tent. The day was insufferably hot. The fierce rays of the sun were beating down on the fly, and Robert was fanning himself with his hat. He ended his remarks with, "Say, this weather is hades."

He called his brother, "general," for since the fierce battle along the Chickahominy, Colonel Hunter had been promoted for gallantry at Gaines's Mill and Malvern Hill.

"What do you mean by saying you are going to resign?" asked the general.

"I mean I am going to leave, going back to the mountains where I can find a little excitement. Not a thing is doing here since the retreat; we just lie around and sweat. Oh, I forgot, I am errand boy for your Highness, and carry around little bits of paper to other Highnesses. McClellan is doing nothing, and it doesn't look as if he ever would unless Bobby Lee stirs him up again. I'm tired of doing nothing. Oh, for just a whiff of cool mountain air — for a good scout! I have begged you to let me go off on a scout all by myself, but you won't."

Colonel Hunter laughed and said, "There are no mountains for you to scout in here."

"No, but there are woods and swamps — capital places to hide in."

"Well, Bob," said his brother, "I will give you a little pleasure. I am going to send out a small scouting party tomorrow under Lieutenant Robinson. It is rumored that the enemy is moving large bodies of troops eastward, and I wish to find out the truth. You may go along if you wish."

"Hurrah!" shouted Robert. "I suppose it means a thirty-mile tramp through the dust and heat, but that's better than lying around doing nothing."

In the morning when Robert joined the scouting party he found it consisted of twenty men. Lieutenant Robinson frowned when he learned Robert was to accompany the party, for he jumped to the conclusion that since he was the general's brother he was sent along to spy upon him; but of course he could say nothing.

Robert had borrowed a carbine and carried his navy revolver in his belt. The men smiled at the armament, and the lieutenant asked him rather sarcastically how many rebels he expected to kill.

"Not more than twenty or thirty," Bob replied without a smile. "Don't you think that enough?"

The men laughed uproariously, and the lieutenant turned red and said no more.

Robert had become a great favorite in the brigade. All knew how he had saved his brother's regiment at Gaines's Mill by carrying ammunition, and how bravely he rode the lines carrying orders there and at Malvern Hill.

Not only this, but there were stories of his exploits as a scout in northern Virginia, and it was known he had come to his brother on account of a wound he had received at Port Republic. On this account the soldiers in the scouting party were well pleased to have him with them.

As it was thought the party might be out more than one day, its members all carried well-filled haversacks.

The men were in the highest spirits, and an early start was made. After marching until nearly noon without meeting any adventures or learning anything of value, they came to a rather pretentious plantation house, and stopped to rest under the trees and make inquiries.

The only white occupants of the house seemed to be the owner, a man about sixty years of age, his wife, and young daughter. At first the man appeared to be uneasy and the women greatly excited. Thinking this due to their unexpected appearance, Lieutenant Robinson thought nothing of it.

The planter, whose name was Helmstead, soon recovered his composure and became very talkative. He invited Lieutenant Robinson into the house, and as the invitation was seconded by his wife and daughter, a rather pretty girl, Robert was surprised to hear the lieutenant refuse.

His estimate of that officer rose a great deal when he heard him tell the sergeant that they were in the enemy's country, and it was his business to be on the lookout, not to be entertained by girls.

Mr. Helmstead replied to their questions that he had not seen an armed Confederate for days. He

had been told a squadron of cavalry had passed along a road a mile north the day before, but thought they must be on a scout. He was certain there had been no general movement of troops to the east. He also deeply deplored the war. He was a southerner and had to be with his state, but had fought secession to the last. He complained bitterly of the Confederate government impressing his slaves to work on the fortifications around Richmond.

He seemed anxious that they should go on to the next road and confirm his statements. "It will be impossible for you to go farther north," he said, "for there is a large swamp beyond, one several miles wide. That will satisfy you that there are no troops moving east this side of the swamp."

Lieutenant Robinson decided to go on until he reached the next road. It would enable him to make a full report of the situation.

During this time Robert had his eyes and ears open. "That old fellow talks too much," he thought. "He is too free with his information." He also noticed that the man appeared somewhat uneasy, and kept giving furtive glances up the road which led west, a road that looked little used. Robert also noticed the two women go to the back door several times and gaze up the same road. Their conduct struck him as strange indeed.

He was certain there was something back of this, but what he could not guess. Mr. Helmstead seemed anxious to get rid of them. Could it be he was sending them into danger?

Robert mentioned his suspicions to Lieutenant Robinson.

"I have thought of that," replied the lieutenant, "and we will go the next mile with extreme caution."

When they reached the road they found everything as Mr. Helmstead had said. Beyond lay the great swamp. Tracks in the road showed that a body of cavalry had passed, but the tracks were at least a day old.

"The old gentleman was straight after all," said the lieutenant. "He has told us all we can hope to learn, and after we eat and rest a little we will return."

The boys opened their haversacks, and were soon feasting on hardtack and raw bacon. Small fires were built and coffee made in their tin cups.

During this time strict watch was kept but nothing occurred to arouse suspicion, and Lieutenant Robinson became convinced that, as Mr. Helmstead had said, there were no Confederates in the neighborhood and he relaxed his vigilance. He would have been surprised if he could have seen what was taking place at the Helmstead plantation.

Hardly had the Federals gone when a young Confederate soldier came out of the house, and laughingly remarked, "Lucky they didn't search the house. How many were there, Dad?"

"Just twenty-one besides the officer in command."

"And Lieutenant Vance has twenty-five. Say, there would have been a pretty little fight right here if Vance had appeared, and he may be here any minute."

"I will have no fighting around the house," growled the father. "Besides the forces are too equal, there is no knowing how it would come out."

"Lieutenant Vance would laugh to hear you say that," replied the son. "He is a South Carolinian and boasts that one from that state can whip five Yankees. He's a perfect little gamecock. Here they come now!"

A squad of soldiers was seen approaching from the west.

"Great news, Lieutenant!" cried young Helmstead as they drew near. "A squad of Yankees has just gone up the road and will be back soon. We can gobble them up when they come."

"How many?" asked the lieutenant.

"Just twenty-one, and a lieutenant in command."

"That will be only a bite instead of a meal," laughed the lieutenant.

He was a mere boy, not more than eighteen and he had an exalted opinion of South Carolina men, of which his squad was composed.

Young Helmstead belonged to a Virginia regiment, but he had been sent with Vance as a guide, this being his native country. In his eagerness to get home, he had come ahead while the party halted to rest.

"I will have no fighting around the house," spoke up Mr. Helmstead. "Those Yankees were husky looking fellows and the lieutenant kept a keen lookout. If you failed to capture them they would burn the house in revenge, and you would lose many men. What you ought to do is to ambush them, then you can take them without any loss. I know a capital place for an ambush about a mile down the road. James knows where it is."

"You bet," said James. "Lieutenant, it is a dandy place for an ambush."

Lieutenant Vance demurred. He said he was aching for a good stand-up fight; but when Miss Helmstead smiled sweetly upon him and said, "Surely, Lieutenant, you would not put mother and me in danger," he gallantly gave in.

"You had better be going then," said Mr. Helmstead, "for the Yankees may be coming back now at any time. They will find things up the road just as I told them, and I reckon that will fool that lieutenant completely."

"Miss Helmstead," said the lieutenant with a sweeping bow, "when I return I will present you with a fine lot of Yankees as trophies."

"What shall I do with them?" laughed the young lady.

"Pen them up and keep them as curiosities," was the reply. "But really, Miss Helmstead, if I had my way there would be no prisoners taken. I would fight under the black flag. Every Yankee who sets foot on our sacred soil merits and should receive death. Then the Yankees would know that we mean business and this war would end at once."

"Mercy! How bloodthirsty you are!" cried the girl. "Please do not massacre your prisoners, for then I would not have the pleasure of looking on a Yankee prisoner."

"They shall know that only your mercy allows them to live," replied the lieutenant gaily, and again bowing to the girl, he marched his men away.

They had been gone but a short time when the Federals were seen returning. Mr. Helmstead met them with a smiling face, and asked how they found things.

"Just as you said," replied the lieutenant. "The swamp is certainly impassable and there were the tracks on the road. Anything new here?"

"Nothing, you can march back to camp without worry."

After a little more talk the lieutenant said they must start as it would be after night now before they got back to camp.

"Well, good luck to you," said Mr. Helmstead, "may you get through the war safely."

"Thank you, good day!" replied the lieutenant.

Mr. Helmstead rubbed his hands in satisfaction as they left. "Soon they'll be coming back as prisoners," he muttered.

Robert had been busy while the men were talking. He was certain from the condition of the ground that visitors had been there since they left. To make sure he carelessly sauntered down the west road. It was little more than a beaten track and before he had gone far he came on evidence that quite a number of men had just been over that road.

But where were they now? Were they so few that they had gone into hiding until the Federals went away? If a large party why did they not attack them? It was not until Robert heard Mr. Helmstead say there was nothing to worry about going back to camp that the truth flashed on him. They were to be waylaid.

Robert spoke to the lieutenant, only to be laughed at. "My boy, you are too suspicious," he said. "You may be a good scout, but I believe Mr. Helmstead to be a candid old gentleman, southern to be sure, but one who has told the truth."

"I may be too suspicious," replied Robert, "but my suspicion has saved my life more than once. I tell you there has been a party here since we left."

But the lieutenant would not believe it, and as if to show Robert how mistaken he was, allowed the men to become careless, marching without order, and taking little notice of what was before them.

Robert's eyes were like a hawk, scanning the road ahead and the woods on either side.

Soon they reached a place which he saw would make an ideal spot for an ambuscade. There was an impassable swamp on one side of the road, and on the other side, dense woods, heavily fringed by a thicket.

As Robert looked, he thought he saw the tops of some of the bushes tremble, as there was no wind he looked more closely and was sure there was something in the bushes.

The lieutenant and a sergeant were a little in advance, then the men came straggling along. Robert was about in the middle, but to one side so he could get a better view of the road. He stepped farther into the woods thinking he might be able to see what was beyond the fringe of bushes. As he did so he caught a glimpse of a butternut uniform, and the gleam of a rifle.

"Back, Lieutenant! Back for your life!" Robert shouted.

He was too late. At the sound of his voice several rifles spoke, and the lieutenant and sergeant fell dead. One man was wounded, and the others panic-stricken started to rush to the rear.

"Don't run," shouted Robert. "Take to the

woods! Rally around me! There are but a few of them."

Some heard and obeyed, others kept on, intent only on getting away.

A Confederate sprang from the bushes into the road. Robert's carbine cracked and the fellow fell. Several had followed him into the road. As he fell, they recoiled and thus were bunched together. The distance was short and Robert used his navy with deadly effect.

Astonished and dismayed at the rapidity of the fire, the Confederates scrambled back into the bushes, but there were two who did not go. They lay by the side of the one who fell first.

"Every man take a tree and hold his ground," commanded Robert, then asked, "Who is in command now?"

"I suppose I am," replied a soldier who was crouching behind a tree near Robert, "but I am only a corporal. I wish you would take command."

"Very well, but if I take command I expect to be obeyed. Where are the rest of the men? I can only count seven."

"They didn't stop when you ordered us to, but kept on running," replied the corporal.

"Corporal," said Robert sternly, "you run back and bring up those men. If one hesitates or refuses to come, shoot him. Understand? Shoot him! You will not have to shoot more than one. Will you obey?"

"Yes."

"Then go quickly. We will try and hold them until you get back."

Robert had the few men near him get into line as nearly as possible. "Keep cool," he said. "Don't expose yourself more than necessary, but fire as fast as you can load until the others come up."

The enemy had recovered now from the effect of Robert's rapid fire, and the officer in command could be heard cursing and giving commands.

Like the Federals they had now deployed, and stationed behind trees, opened a hot fire.

Soon the corporal came back accompanied by the men.

"I found them huddled together," he said, "not knowing what to do, but when I said you were up here fighting with only six men they were eager to come back."

"They are brave men, only the sudden fire stampeded them," replied Robert. "They will be all right now."

Robert stationed the men, bidding them to keep well covered, but to shoot if they saw no more than the hand of an enemy.

The firing was now hot on both sides and Robert soon had two men wounded.

"This will never do," he thought. "I will have to try different tactics."

Going to the corporal Robert explained that he was going to take six men, and try to gain the rear of the enemy. If he could do this without being discovered the fight would be won.

"But their whole force would turn on you," objected the corporal.

"There is where you come in," replied Robert. "As soon as we withdraw keep up a rapid fire so

they will not notice any decrease in front. The moment you hear me attack in the rear, you charge. Come with a rush. There will not be much danger for we will occupy their attention. Explain this to the men. The success of this movement depends as much on you as on me. Don't hesitate when the time comes."

"I'll not fail you," replied the corporal.

Robert picked his six men, and they all stealthily made their way to the rear. Robert explained his plan to them and they were eager to start. It did not take long to circle around the line.

When Robert knew by the enemy's firing that their flank had been passed, be turned and came up squarely in their rear. So intent were they in watching the front that Robert and his men were right on them before they were discovered.

"Surrender!" shouted Robert.

The rebels wheeled, and to their consternation saw the Federals in their rear.

"South Carolinians never surrender," shouted the young lieutenant in command, and with drawn sword he rushed on the soldier nearest him.

The soldier fired and the lieutenant went down with a bullet through the shoulder.

For a few moments the fighting was hot, but Corporal Pease came rushing down with his men and the fight was over, the Confederates throwing down their arms and crying for mercy.

Robert found in the last encounter he had one man killed and four wounded. In the little army of Confederates nearly half had been killed and wounded.

The wounded lieutenant had risen to a sitting

position and was trying to stanch the flow of blood from his shoulder. Robert asked kindly, "Are you badly hurt? Let me do something for you?"

The lieutenant looked up, and Robert started back in amazement. He was looking into the face of Marion Vance, one of his classmates at the Virginia Institute. He nearly went wild with enthusiasm when South Carolina seceded, and he and Robert had nearly come to blows when Robert had said he thought South Carolina had made a mistake.

"Great Heavens! Is this you, May?" gasped Robert.

"Yes, it is I," snarled young Vance, "and you are Robert Hunter. D— you! Don't touch me. I had rather die than have you do anything for me."

The excitement and loss of blood proved too much for Vance, and he fell back in a faint.

Robert bade one of the men see to him and turned away with a sigh.

Fortunately for the wounded, a squadron of cavalry out scouting heard the firing and came on a gallop to investigate. There were explanations, and one of the men was sent back to camp for ambulances and surgeons. In the meantime all that was possible was done for the wounded.

"There 's a house about a mile back," said Robert, "and the planter there had something to do with this affair. He did everything he could to lull the suspicions of Lieutenant Robinson.

"Let us take the dead Confederates there and these two who are too severely wounded to move. As for the planter he should be arrested for his duplicity."

Robert went to the house accompanied by a detachment of cavalry, but his bird had flown, for as they approached the house they saw Mr. Helmstead flee through a field and disappear into a woods. The mother and daughter were still at home, but wild with terror.

"Madam, we do not make war on women," said Robert. "I saw your husband fleeing through the fields. Although he deserves punishment for his treachery, I have come on a different errand. The Confederates who have been killed and two severely wounded will be brought here. The dead for burial, the wounded for care."

"The dead!" gasped the woman. "Were there some killed?"

"Yes, several killed and wounded."

"And my boy?" the words came almost in a whisper from the ashen lips of the mother.

"Did you have a son in the company?" asked Robert in astonishment.

"Yes, he was secreted here in the house the first time you came."

"I do not know whether he is killed or a prisoner, but I will inquire and let you know," said Robert.

"Can't I go back with you?" she wailed. "I must know whether Jim is alive or not."

"Yes, you can come," replied Robert.

The mother and sister went, and in their eagerness fairly ran.

Coming to where the conflict had been, the women as if by premonition turned to where the dead lay. As their eyes fell on one face, calm in death, the mother gave a scream and fainted, and the sister

sank to the ground weeping as if her heart would break. Bitterly had they been punished for the treachery of the father.

The arrival of the courier calling for ambulances and surgeons created great excitement in the camp, and the news that there had been a fight ran through the brigade like wildfire.

The courier was brought before General Hunter and questioned, but he knew little of the fight, as he had been sent for help at once. But he knew that both Lieutenant Robinson and Sergeant Vancleve had been killed, and some young fellow, a mere boy, had taken command, and the entire Confederate party had been killed or captured. He had not heard the name of the young soldier but everyone was sounding his praise. He had heard his major say the boy ought to be a general.

"And the boy came through safe?" asked the general.

"As far as I know. He must or I would have heard of it," was the answer.

"It must have been Robert," murmured the general. "Thank God, he is safe."

When relief came, the wounds of both Federals and Confederates were carefully dressed. Then the two most dangerously wounded and the dead were taken to the Helmstead home.

When Lieutenant Vance's wound had been dressed, and he had been given a little soup, he became more reconciled, and even expressed a desire to see Robert.

"I am sorry I spoke as I did, Bob," he said, "but I was beside myself. I expected an easy victory. I tell you it's tough."

"I'm glad of one thing. It wasn't I who shot you," replied Robert.

"So am I," said May, "for I believe you would have shot straighter."

It was long past midnight when camp was reached, but it was wide awake and all astir to meet and mourn the dead, and cheer the living.

There was no sleep for General Hunter until he had heard the entire story of the fight, and after Robert had been given a hearty meal he was forced to tell it.

When he finished the general said, "Bob, I am proud of you. What can I do for you?"

"Let me go to bed, I am dead tired," answered Bob.

"All right, Bob, go with my blessing."

But after he had started the general called, "Say, Bob."

"What," answered Bob drowsily for he was about half asleep.

With a faint smile around his mouth the general asked, "Bob, have you had enough excitement for one day?"

"Plenty," growled Bob as he blundered out.

CHAPTER IV

ROBERT GOES TO MEET JIM

THE Army of the Potomac rested in safety at Harrison Landing. What to do next was the perplexing problem which confronted McClellan. He had two things in mind — one was to attack Richmond from where he lay, the other to cross the James and attack Richmond by way of Petersburg.[1]

Before making either move he demanded fifty thousand fresh troops. He believed all his misfortunes to have been the fault of the government, and not his. He could not see that his slowness had enabled the Confederates to double their army at Richmond, and he had no idea he had been so near victory at Gaines's Mill.

The government had many sins to answer for as well as McClellan. The same timidity that kept back McClellan affected the government. The fear at Washington made the government call back McDowell when he was on his way to reinforce McClellan. If McClellan had had the twenty thousand additional troops that McDowell was bringing, in all probability he would have taken Richmond.

Not only this, but at the moment that Fremont and Shields were about to combine and strike Jackson after the battle of Port Republic, Shields was ordered

[1] This was the move that Grant made two years later.

to join McDowell, thus leaving an open road for Jackson to join Lee.

Halleck had recently been appointed Chief of Staff by Lincoln, and he and McClellan were alike in one particular — they were always seeing two of the enemy where only one existed.

Lincoln visited McClellan at Harrison Landing, and the movement across the James was decided on; but when McClellan called on Halleck for fifty thousand fresh troops, he was flatly refused, Halleck saying he could only furnish twenty thousand. While Halleck and McClellan were quarreling, Lee decided what the next move would be.

In the meantime General John Pope had been called from the west and placed in command of all the troops in Virginia, with the exception of those of McClellan on the Peninsula.

The new army was called the Army of Virginia, while the army under McClellan still retained the name of the Army of the Potomac.

General Pope had a fine record. He had captured New Madrid and Island No. 10, taking thousands of prisoners, and during the so-called "Siege of Corinth" was one of the most aggressive of the Union generals; but his sudden promotion swelled his head.

On taking command of the Army of Virginia he made a bombastic address which did not set well on the stomachs of the eastern army.[1]

[1] In part, the address read: "Soldiers: I have come to you from the west where we have always seen the backs of the enemy. Our policy there was to attack, not to defend. I have been called here for the same purpose. I hear here too much talk of strong positions; of lines of retreat; of bases of supplies. Let us look before us and not behind us."

With this explanation of the situation we will return to Robert.

A few days after his eventful scout he received a letter from Jim Kidder, who had been his partner in all his scouting in the West Virginia mountains and Shenandoah Valley.

Jim was a mountain boy with no education, but as brave as a lion, and on a scout he had all the keenness of an Indian. He was also an unerring shot.

Jim had had someone write the letter for him. It ran:

Bob:

I am here in Washington. I want you. I want you bad. General Pope is here in command, and he is going to make things hum. All the troops that were with Fremont and Banks are coming this way. Milroy is coming. It will be great to see the old general again.

General Pope has engaged me as a scout, and I have told him about you, and he wants you too. In fact I told him I would not go if you did not come. Be sure and come.

I hear that McClellan got whipped. I bet it wasn't your fault.

Now come! Don't go back on your old pal.

Faithfully yours,

Jim.

Robert smiled. Although Jim's amanuensis must have toned down his mountain vocabulary a great deal, Robert could see Jim all through the letter.

"Good for you, Jim," thought Robert. "It is just what I have been wishing. This camp life is getting irksome. The mountains for me and the free

life of the scout. In these great battles a soldier is nothing but a pawn to be moved by others, but in a scout you match your own wits against those of the enemy. You are general and soldier in one. There is a lure in the business I cannot resist."

Robert handed the letter to his brother, remarking, "Read that, General, and see what you think of it."

General Hunter read the letter and looked at Robert seriously. "Robert, you don't think of going back, do you?" he asked.

"Yes, I believe I must go," answered Robert. "I can't disappoint Jim. Besides, I believe it is my duty to go."

"It may be your duty to stay here," replied his brother. "Think what you accomplished the other day. Everyone says you saved the party from capture, and it has made you the talk of the brigade. Can't you get scouting enough here without running wild through the mountains and woods?"

"It is the running wild that I like," said Robert. "What happened the other day was mere chance. If Lieutenant Robinson and Sergeant Vancleve had not been killed by the first fire, you well know I would only have been as one of the soldiers. If the lieutenant had lived, and been successful, he would have been the whole thing. His men would have been praised as a whole, and that would have been the end of it. Now Jim and I scout alone. It's a heap more fun."

"Yes, and much more dangerous," replied his brother. "Bob, don't you realize that you put your neck in a noose in every scout that you make? I

shudder every time I think of it. Great Heavens! to know that you may be hung! To die on the battle field is an honor, but there is no glory in being hung. Don't go. If you must remain in the army stay with me. I do not think I would have any trouble in getting you a commission as second lieutenant, and I will put you on my staff. It is a position that any boy of your age should be proud to hold."

"I don't want any commission, don't want to be on your staff, don't want to be a lieutenant, although I appreciate the honor," said Robert vigorously. "Look here, Clayt, you don't understand. On your staff I would simply be an orderly with a commission, my business would be to carry orders. An honorable and useful business, but not to my liking. I hate to leave you, but this camp life is irksome. I long for the free air of the mountains, the trail through the forests, the spying out of the secrets of the enemy. I admit that it is better to be shot for your country than to be hung, but Nathan Hale was hung, and his name is revered as one of the greatest of American patriots."

General Hunter sighed. "Bob, I don't like it," he answered.

Robert pointed to the flag which was floating over the camp. "Clayt, we are risking our lives that that flag may float over a united country," he exclaimed. "We love that flag. To us it is the symbol of liberty, of justice, of all we hold dear. The life of this nation is in the balance. It is our duty to go where we can do the most good. You are a general. I hope to see you commanding a division, yes, a

corps. On your judgment may depend the issue of a battle. But another can carry your orders as well as I. As a scout I may be able to do as much for my country as you. I may obtain information that will mean a victory or the avoidance of a defeat. A nod of the head of an obscure guide lost Napoleon the field of Waterloo. I know that as a scout I can be of much greater use to my country than on your staff. So, brother, give me your blessing and let me go."

"Go," said General Hunter, in a choking voice. "Go, and may God be with you."

A week later found Robert in Washington where he had no difficulty in locating Jim.

Jim so lost his mountain reserve that he fairly danced for joy when he saw Robert. "Bob, Bob, I'm glad to see yo'!" he cried, "but I knew yo' would come. How be yo' anyway."

"Fine, Jim, and how are you? I tell you the sight of you does me good."

"No moah than the sight of yo' does me. I tell yo', Bob, I couldn't think of goin' scoutin' without yo'. And there is going to be things doin' around heah. General Pope is a hummer, he is. Don't know how good a general he will make, but he's got things movin'. I got an introduction to him, and when he saw my papers he said right away that he wanted me for a scout. I told him I couldn't think of it unless I had yo' with me. So I had that letter wrote to yo'. Bob, I wish I could write."

"Perhaps I will teach you some day; but go on, Jim, what next?"

"When I told the general that, he said he would

put your name down, and for me to get yo' as soon as I could."

"So you have me in business already," laughed Robert. "Since I have been gone I have been Robert Hunter, the brother of General Hunter, but now I am once more Bob Jones, just a mountain boy."[1]

"Is your brother a general?" cried Jim.

"Yes, and a mighty good one if I do say it," replied Bob. "Jim, you should have been with me at Gaines's Mill and at Malvern Hill. All the battles we saw in northern Virginia were nothing but little skirmishes compared to them."

"But yo' got licked didn't yo'?"

Bob's countenance fell. "Yes, Jim, we did," he said slowly; "but it was not the fault of the soldiers, they fought splendidly."

"More bum generalship, I suppose," drawled Jim. "But, Bob, didn't yo' take a single scout while yo' was gone?"

"Yes, one," and Bob told of his scout.

Jim's eyes glistened as he listened. "Bob, I bet your brother, the general, couldn't have done better than that," he exclaimed.

"Now, Jim, tell me what you have been doing. Don't tell me you had no adventures while I was away."

"I had one little skirmish I wasn't lookin' for," replied Jim. "If I hadn't went home when I did I wouldn't have any dad and ma now."

"Why, how is that?" cried Bob.

[1] Bob Jones was the name Robert took when he fled from Winchester accused of being a spy. See *The Boy Scouts of the Shenandoah.*

"Well, yo' see I've been sendin' dad some money every now and then. The last time I sent, a neighbor, a worthless cuss, called Hank Jumper, happened to be thar when it cum, and dad had no more sense than to show it to him, jest to brag on what a good son he had.

"It was more money than Hank had ever seen before in his life, and he said, 'I thought, Kidder, yo' was gittin' along mighty well. Does Jim send often?'

"'Not often, but every once in a while,' said dad.

"'My, but yo' must have lots of it hidden away,' said Hank rather enviously. 'I never had such luck. My Jake is no good.'

"He soon went away and ma said, 'Pa, you hadn't ought to have shown Hank that money.'

"'Hank hasn't got life enough to steal,' answered dad.

"But dad was mistaken. That part of the country is overrun with guerrillas, despirit fellers, ready to rob or murder for a dollar. Hank got hold of fellers as low down as he, and they put up a scheme to make dad tell where the money was hid. Then they were goin' to kill dad and ma and burn the house and everyone would think that guerrillas did it out of revenge because I was with the Yankees.

"I wanted to surprise the ole folks so I sneaked up through the woods back of the house, where no one could see me comin' and it was well I did so, for one of the fellers was watchin' in front, an' as I was all unsuspectin' he might have got me.

"Jest before I got to the house I heard ma screaming awful, and then she stopped kinder sudden. I

knew something was happenin' and I reached the house in no time, and busted in the door quicker than a kickin' mule. And what do yo' think I saw? Ma was tied up and a gag was in her mouth and dad was tied in a chair. One of the devils was heating his ramrod and swearin' he would burn dad's eyes out if he didn't tell whar the money was hid.

"My carbine cracked twice before you could say Jack Robinson and the two fellers went down in a heap. The feller outside poked his head in the door to see what the trouble was and I got him right between the eyes."

"Great work, Jim!" cried Bob.

"It didn't take no time to cut dad and ma loose, and I thought ma would smother me, cryin' and laughin' and kissin' and huggin' me all at the same time.

"'Dad,' says I, 'this is a dangerous country to live in, and I think yo' had better migrate.'

"'Jim Kidder, I'm ashamed of yo',' says dad. 'If yo' hadn't jest done what yo' have, I'd say yo' was a coward. What! A Kidder sneak away like a whipped cur? Never! If these devils hadn't come as friends, they'd never have got me. Jabez Kidder stays right heah!'

"'Good for yo' dad,' I says, 'but don't let them fool yo' agin.'

"What to do with the dead fellers worried us. They had lots of relatives that might make trouble for dad, so we decided to bury them and say nothin'. We cleaned up the cabin, put the fellers under ground, and threw brush over the graves and no one was wiser.

"Say, them fellers' folks are wonderin' yet what become of them, and lookin' for them to come home. Reckon they will have to keep on lookin', too," and Jim chuckled.

The manner in which the bodies of the slain men were disposed of shocked Bob, but when he considered the state of the country, and the bitter feuds which break out among mountaineers, over the killing of a relative, he decided it was the part of wisdom to act as Bob's folks had done.

The next morning the boys dressed themselves in the rough homespun suits of country boys, and presented themselves to General Pope. The general looked at Bob sharply and asked abruptly, "Are you a mountain boy?"

"No," replied Bob, "but Jim and I have scouted together for months."

"I need good scouts," said the general, "and I see you both have the best of recommendations. When can you be ready to start for the front?"

"We are ready now," replied Bob.

"Good," answered the general. "Report to General Banks at Culpepper. I, myself, shall be at Culpepper shortly, and will see you."

"Banks! Banks!" muttered Bob, as he turned away. "I don't think much of Banks. He was a plaything in the hands of Jackson.

CHAPTER V

CEDAR MOUNTAIN

BOB and Jim were concealed in a tangle of bushes by the side of a road which led to Orange Court House.

"We haven't found out much yet, Jim," said Bob. "I believe we will have to halt and interview someone passing along the road."

"Kind of dangerous," drawled Jim. "Bear in mind that squadron of cavalry that jest passed us goin' north."

"Have to run the risk," answered Bob. "Something must be done. If we are lucky enough to get hold of the right party we may be able to get some news."

Bob let three or four men pass, as they appeared to be residents of the neighborhood, and in all probability could give him no information.

At last a lumbering coach appeared, a vehicle held in esteem by the gentry of that day. The coach was drawn by a spirited pair of horses and driven by a black coachman in livery.

"That's the outfit we want," said Bob stepping into the road.

As the coach came abreast of him Bob covered the coachman with his revolver and ordered him to stop. The frightened man lost no time in obeying.

"What does this mean? What are you stopping

for?" inquired a querulous voice from inside and the red, angry face of an old gentleman appeared at the window.

When he saw Bob, roughly dressed and fully armed, he drew back in alarm and asked in a trembling voice, "What do you want? If you are holding us up I have but little."

"Oh, Papa!" cried a sweet voice. "Are we being held up? How romantic!" The fair face of a young girl of about sixteen years of age appeared by the side of her father.

Bob swept off his battered hat and bowing low said, "I beg a thousand pardons, fair lady, but we are not highwaymen but scouts for General Jackson, and we halted you to see if we could not get some information we are sadly in need of. We have orders that will take us to Staunton, but we have just learned that Pope has received large reinforcements at Culpepper, and contemplates attacking Jackson at Gordonsville. When we left Gordonsville Jackson was expecting reinforcements. If they have come we will go on, for Jackson will be strong enough to withstand any attack, but if the reinforcements have not come it will be our duty to disobey our orders, and return to inform Jackson of the danger.

"Seeing from appearances that you are a man of importance, I made bold to halt you. I will also say I am not what my appearance indicates. I am from one of the first families of the state, and it gives me pleasure to meet a gentleman such as you are, Judge."

The old gentleman's chest swelled with pride. "Yo' have hit it, suh," he replied. "I am Judge Cadwalader. But how did you know I was a judge?"

"A thousand pardons, fair lady, but we are not highwaymen"

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"From your distinguished legal countenance, sir," replied Bob.

The judge fairly beamed. "I am happy to meet you, Mr. — Mr. — " he stammered.

"Lieutenant Ripley, sir," replied Bob. "These are my masquerading clothes."

"I knew it," cried the young lady. "I knew you were not poor white trash. Now that you're not a highwayman, the next best thing is being a scout. I just dote on scouts. Last week I was visiting a friend, Agnes Somers, near Staunton and — "

"Agnes Somers! Do you know her?" cried Bob forgetting himself.

"Why do you know Agnes?" exclaimed the young lady in surprise.

Bob was himself again. "Only slightly. I met her once in Winchester. If you meet her again tell her you met Lieutenant Ripley, and that he sent his best regards."

Then turning to the judge, he said, "Your charming daughter has almost made me forget my duty. You have not told me yet whether you can give me the information I wish."

"I am happy to state," replied the judge, "that General Hill's division arrived in Gordonsville yesterday."

"Thank you," cried Bob. "That makes it all right. My regards to the young lady. We must go."

Much to the surprise of the judge and his daughter Bob and Jim immediately disappeared in the brush. Bob had seen a company of cavalry coming.

The judge was still rubbing his eyes in surprise when the cavalry rode up.

"What's up?" asked the officer in command. "I thought I saw two men talking to you. Where are they?"

"I don't know," replied the judge. "They disappeared suddenly just before you came. They were two boys. Said they were scouts for General Jackson."

"Scouts for Jackson!" cried the officer. "What did they want?"

"Said they had orders to go to Staunton, but had found out that General Pope is contemplating a move on Gordonsville, and wanted to know whether Jackson had been reinforced or not."

"And like an old fool I suppose you told them," said the officer contemptuously.

Judge Cadwalader hung his head and made no reply.

"Do you know what you have done?" cried the officer. "Those boys were Yankee spies, and you gave them the information they wanted. I ought to hang you. Go home and hang yourself, you old idiot."

The judge, a very subdued man, ordered his coachman to proceed.

"Father, I believe I know who that young man was," said his daughter. "It was Robert Hunter, the nephew of General Clayton. He is a famous Yankee scout. You know he said he knew Agnes Somers. Agnes told me—"

"Shut up," roared the judge.

But the girl said to herself, "Why it's almost as nice as meeting a highwayman. What a story I'll have to tell Agnes."

The boys made their way to Culpepper without adventure and reported to General Banks.

"It will be only one division more to fight," said the general. "Pope will be here with his whole army before long."

It was shortly afterwards that General Banks was ordered to advance his corps a few miles south of Culpepper and take a strong position along Cedar Run, and if General Jackson should advance, not to leave his position but wait for him to attack.

The position was such a strong one that Pope thought Banks could hold it against any force that Jackson could bring against it. Pope did not wish to advance on Gordonsville until he had had time to concentrate his whole army.

On the evening of August seventh the boys stood on the top of Slaughter Mountain. A glorious panorama of mountains, fertile valleys, and forests was spread out before them. The fields were groaning beneath rich harvests. In the west, the sun was setting in a blaze of glory. Fleecy clouds were lazily floating along tinged with gorgeous colors, but the boys were taking little heed of the beautiful view.

Bob always carried a strong field glass secreted in his clothes, and this glass was now glued to his eyes. Low in the south was a cloud of dust. It seemed to rise higher and higher, and to come nearer.

"Jackson's army is on the march and is coming this way," said Bob.

"That dust may be raised by a regiment of cavalry," replied Jim.

The boys had planned to stay on the mountain, and had selected a place to camp. It was between

two large rocks entirely overgrown by a mass of vines. In front of the opening was a clump of thick laurel also covered with vines. They had discovered the place by accident as they were climbing the mountain. It was about half-way up the side.

"A capital place to hide. We may want to use it," said Bob.

Jim examined the place carefully. "It's so dark back in thar that if anyone parted the laurel and looked in, he could see nothing. It certainly will be a fine place to hide."

Night settled down. To the northward across the valley glowed the camp fires of the Federal army. The boys were undecided whether to spend the night on the mountain or return to camp, and report the cloud of dust they had seen. They finally decided to stay and spend the night in the place in the rocks.

They were very tired and soon fell asleep, but towards morning were awakened by sounds which startled them. From the valley came voices of men, tramping of horses, and the clank of sabers.

"We are fine scouts, we are," gasped Bob. "Here we've let the rebels surround us, and have failed to warn Banks."

"Never mind Banks," growled Jim. "Even if we had warned him it would have done no good, for he has orders to stay where he is. If Jackson attacks in the morning, he will have plenty of warning. It's you and I who are in a tight place."

"It may not be so bad. We may find a way to get away when it gets light," replied Bob.

With anxious hearts the boys waited for morning, but before it was really light soldiers began climbing

the mountain. A number passed so close to where the boys lay that they could hear them joking of what Jackson was going to do to old Banks.

Jackson, feeling the importance of securing Slaughter Mountain as a point of observation, had sent forward a regiment of cavalry to seize it.

When it was fully light Bob carefully parted the bushes and looked out. He saw no way of escape. A signal station had been established on top of the mountain, and the soldiers in coming and going passed within less than a hundred yards of the boys. They had rations for two days with them and their canteens were full of water, so, except for the fear of discovery, they were very comfortable.

By carefully making a small opening in the vines Bob got a fine view of what was taking place below. The soldiers seemed to have settled themselves, and to have no idea of advancing. Once in a while the faint sound of a few shots came to his ears.

Through the long day the boys lay and watched. Towards evening Jackson came up. He pitched his headquarters almost directly beneath where the boys lay, about two hundred feet up the side of the mountain. This gave him a view of the valley beneath him.

With the coming of night the boys grew restless. They longed to crawl out of their narrow quarters and stretch their cramped limbs. As the night was very dark, and they could hear no one near them they decided to do so.

Bob conceived the wild idea of creeping down towards Jackson's headquarters to see if he could not learn something, but Jim objected strenuously.

"What's the good? Even if we did learn anything it would be of no use since we are cooped up here."

"That's so," replied Bob. But the temptation was so strong that he concluded to try it. He told Jim to stay there and he would go by himself, but Jim refused to stay, saying in a grieved voice that he was surprised that Bob would think of such a thing.

"Forgive me, Jim," said Bob. "I didn't mean what you think. I won't go if you don't want to."

But Jim was now eager to go, so both began to creep down the mountain. Every twig, every loose stone, was carefully removed as they felt their way foot by foot. Suddenly Jim whispered, "'Sh — I hear footsteps."

They both listened and could hear someone slowly coming up the mountain. Just before the person reached the boys the sounds ceased, and for a moment all was still. Then a voice arose in prayer. A voice earnest, but subdued. As Christ retired into the mountain to pray, so had Jackson retired to pray to the Savior he worshiped. How he prayed! He seemed to wrestle with God as Jacob wrestled with the angel.

The boys listened spellbound, and Bob's mind flew back to the time he had heard Jackson pray at the Military Institute when he beseeched God to help him choose aright in the great conflict that was coming. Now he was praying that victory might be his, that God would aid him in the battle. Here, where he thought himself alone, he was pouring out his whole soul to his God.[1]

[1] It is stated that Jackson spent almost the entire night before the battle in prayer.

The boys listened filled with awe. They felt that they were on holy ground, and silently they crept back.

Safe in their retreat again, Bob felt Jim shiver and tremble, and asked him what was wrong.

"I am skeered, skeered," replied Jim in a choked voice. "General Jackson talks with God. Thar is no use fightin' him."

The superstitious child of the mountains really thought that Jackson had talked with God face to face.

"Jim, don't feel like that," replied Bob. "To-night, not only General Jackson is praying but millions of others. Those in the South praying that victory will come to their side, those in the North that to them will be the victory. God only knows which prayer will be answered."

"But they don't pray like Jackson," answered Jim. "He prays as if God stood right by his side, and heard every word he was saying, and I believe he does. Bob, I tell yo' we are whipped. Who kin fight against Jackson when God is with him? That's the reason he always whips."

The rest of the night passed dolefully. The boys could not sleep.

Morning came and Robert looking through his peep-hole could see little change. Jackson did not seem in a hurry to attack. Jim lay still, seeming to take no interest in anything. When Bob told him to take a look he refused saying, "What's the use? The Lord is agin us."

Bob let him alone hoping the spell would soon pass off.

In the afternoon there was great commotion in the camp. Lines of battle were formed and officers were dashing here and there. Brigades were hurried away and disappeared in the woods.

"Jim, they are going to attack," cried Bob.

He turned his glass towards the Union line, and gasped in amazement. Banks had left his strong position and moved his army out into the valley, and was attacking Jackson. What did it mean? Could Banks have been strongly reinforced and fearing Jackson would not attack, had attacked him?

Banks had a scout in whom he placed great reliance. This scout had reported that only a small portion of Jackson's army was in front, not more than two brigades. They were making a good show while in all probability Jackson was making some other move. These brigades were so situated as to be easily captured.

Banks listened. He had suffered greatly in reputation during the campaign in northern Virginia, and now he thought he saw a chance to reinstate himself. So great was the opportunity that he believed he was justified in disobeying orders. So he left his position, moved out into the valley, and threw his entire army on Jackson.

Bob watched the conflict with fascinated gaze. Woods hid part of the field, but from the forest came a perfect inferno of sounds, and smoke rose above the tree tops as if a volcano were raging below. The thunder of the cannon seemed to shake the mountain.

At times even above the roar of the conflict could be heard the cheers of the Federals, and the answering yells of the Confederates. The cheers of the

Federals was a steady roll of mighty voices, the yell of the Confederates like the wild staccato notes of some great stringed instrument out of tune.

The battle came nearer. The Confederates brought a battery part way up the mountain and planted it almost beneath the boys. It opened fire and the Federals answered, and soon shells were splintering the rocks around them. One shot ploughed through the vines and splintered the rock above them scattering debris on every side.

The sound of conflict roused Jim but he could not entirely shake off his superstitious fear. He still believed the Lord was fighting with Jackson.

For two hours the conflict raged without seeming advantage for either side. Then the Federals made a flank movement, and suddenly struck the left of the Confederate line on flank and in the rear. It was a crushing blow and soon the two brigades of the enemy were in hot retreat, and panic seized the line. It looked as if the day was lost.

Jackson saw the danger, and spurring his horse among the fleeing men drew his sword and shouted in a voice heard above the din of battle, "Rally, brave men, and press forward! Your general will lead you! Jackson will lead you!"

The men heard, halted, rallied. The lines were reformed and then under the leadership of Jackson, rushed forward with irresistible force. The whole Federal army was swept from the field.[1]

Bob watching the battle saw the flank movement,

[1] This and Sheridan's exploit at Cedar Creek are the only incidents known during the war where the personal magnetism of a general saved his army from defeat. It was said that

saw the Confederate ranks crushed and broken, saw them fleeing wildly to the rear and called, "Jim, Jim, you are mistaken, Banks is winning. The rebels are running like sheep."

"What's that you say?" cried Jim.

"The rebs are running. But no, what's that? A horseman has dashed among the fleeing men — he draws his sword. I can see it flash. The men are cheering. They rally — they form — the whole rebel line sweeps forward. Our line is swept from the field!" Bob fell back with a groan. Then he cried, "Thank God! Night is near."

"I knowed God was with Jackson," was all Jim said.

The broken lines of the Federals were met by the advance of McDowell's corps. The retreat was covered, and soon the Federals were back in the position they should never have left.

The Union army fully expected to be attacked the next day, but Jackson was wary and refused to attack, and the day was passed in desultory skirmish firing and now and then a cannon shot. Jackson contented himself in gathering up the spoils of the battle field.

The next day there was a truce, and each side gathered and buried its dead.

The following morning found Jackson gone. He had withdrawn his army to Gordonsville.

All this time the boys lay in their retreat, a prey to their doubts and fears. They said little the night after the battle, each being occupied with his

Jackson was never known to unsheathe his sword in battle until he did so at this time.

own thoughts. The cheers of the victorious army smote on their hearts, as if a bullet had struck them.

The weary night passed and morning came. To the boys' surprise Jackson did not renew the fight. Night came again and the boys were in a sorry plight. The last crust had been eaten, the last drop of water drunk.

Another day dawned and they saw the two armies employed in burying their dead.

A raging thirst seized the boys and hunger gnawed at their vitals. They tightened their belts and chewed green leaves which afforded a little moisture to their parched mouths.

"Jim, we can't stand this much longer," said Bob. "We will have to give up."

"And be hung," said Jim.

After some discussion the boys decided to wait until the latter part of the night and then try to creep through the rebel lines. They would rather die fighting than stay where they were and perish from hunger and thirst.

During the forepart of the night they could hear the rumble of artillery and beat of horses' hoofs and the tramp of marching feet. Then all was quiet.

After waiting a short time they crept from their retreat and carefully made their way down the mountain. But they met no enemy. Jackson had gone.

It was two weary boys, half-crazed with thirst and famished for food that made their way into the Union lines that night.[1]

[1] Perhaps there was no battle fought during the war that has been so persistently misrepresented as the battle of Cedar Mountain; or Cedar Run, as it is called by the Confederates.

Southern histories claim that Jackson met and defeated an overwhelming force of the enemy. Even some northern histories fall into the same error. I have a standard history before me now that claims that Jackson with a force of 18,000 or 20,000 met and defeated a Federal force of 32,000. No history I have read has done Banks' army full justice. The fact is that Banks met and fought for hours, and nearly defeated an army almost three times the size of his own.

In this battle Jackson had four divisions consisting of ten brigades. His infantry regiments numbered over forty. Besides the infantry, he had ample artillery and a small brigade of cavalry. Every one of these regiments was actually engaged in the battle as shown by his list of killed and wounded.

Banks' corps consisted of five small brigades. His infantry regiments numbered eighteen, and he had about four hundred cavalry. Thus he was outnumbered more than two to one, and that it was this little corps that fought for hours and nearly won a victory shows with what bravery the Federals fought.

McDowell's corps did not appear on the field until after Banks was routed, and they only helped cover the retreat. His whole corps only lost 168 in the battle, which shows how little part they took in it.

Even if the Confederates claim that McDowell's corps was in the fight, and should be counted, the Federals were still outnumbered, as there were only eighteen infantry regiments in McDowell's corps.

In this battle the Federal loss was 2,381, the Confederate loss 1,276. In killed and wounded the Confederate loss was the greater.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPECTERS OF BULL RUN

IT WAS two days after the boys left Slaughter Mountain. They had eaten their fill, and now felt as though they had never been hungry in their lives. The fearsome days they had spent in hiding had become only one of their exciting experiences.

Jim was lying under a tree lazily looking up into the sky when Bob came up.

"Bob, what made Jackson run away after he had whipped us," he asked.

"I suppose after McDowell came up he thought Pope had the most men and thought it the part of wisdom to retire," answered Bob.

"Do you think Pope had?" asked Jim.

"I don't know, but, unless Jackson has been reinforced, Pope certainly is stronger now that Sigel has come up with his corps."

"Then why don't Pope go after Jackson and knock blazes out of him? 'Pears to me Pope is afraid of Jackson."

"Why shouldn't he be if your theory is true?" asked Bob with a smile. "You say the Lord is with Jackson."

"I said it, and I believe it," said Jim stoutly, "but I hope he won't allers be."

"Perhaps your faith will go as far as Jackson's," replied Bob.

Jim shook his head. "I reckon I'm foolish, but I can't get over that prayer."

Bob moved away but soon came back with some startling news. "Jim, what do you think? I have just heard that the army is to fall back to the Rappahannock."

"What? Run again?" cried Jim, jumping to his feet.

"It looks like it."

"Let's quit scoutin' for such a blasted army. It's nothing but run all the time."

"It's not the fault of the army, Jim. It's the fault of the generals. Look how the boys fought the other day. Nearly whipped Jackson's big army."

"Better kill the generals then," growled Jim.

Bob had heard aright. Pope had concluded to fall back from his advanced position and form his line behind the Rappahannock, which was a stronger position and one much easier to defend. It seemed that the battle of Cedar Mountain had knocked all ideas of an offensive campaign out of Pope's head.

McClellan still remained idle on the Peninsula, he and Halleck quarreling as to what should be done. Lee decided the question for them.

Becoming convinced that McClellan intended no immediate advance on Richmond, Lee began to move his army up to reinforce Jackson. This movement becoming known, McClellan was ordered to evacuate the Peninsula and move back to reinforce Pope.

This order was received by many of the officers of the Army of the Potomac not only with indignation but with rage. It made the campaign on the Peninsula a complete failure. The hardships through which

the Army of the Potomac had passed, the bravery with which they had fought, and the blood they had shed, were all for naught.

To McClellan the order was a crushing blow for it really placed him subordinate to Pope, but he began to obey the order without delay.

It now became evident that the whole of Lee's army was on the move, and that a great battle would be fought along the Rappahannock, or closer to Washington.

Lee promptly moved up and occupied Culpepper on its evacuation by Pope, and it now became a question whether he would not try and force a passage across the Rappahannock.

During the stirring week that followed the evacuation of Culpepper, Bob and Jim found plenty to do. They now had horses, and were with the cavalry guarding the left flank of the army. The command they were with was on the extreme left, escorting the last train that left Culpepper. It was hurrying to get across the Rappahannock before it was captured by the enemy.

General J. E. B. Stuart, the indefatigable cavalry general, was laying plans to catch that same train. He and General Fitzhugh Lee were to meet where the road from Orange Court House crossed the Rappahannock, this being the place where the train would cross the river.

General Stuart with his escort rode ahead of his command to where he expected to meet Fitzhugh Lee, but he had not arrived. It being evening Stuart decided to camp for the night at a farmhouse near-by, making his bed on the porch.

The train was aware that the Confederates were right behind them, and that they would have to make time to get across the river so they traveled all night. It was early morning when the train reached the point where General Stuart was resting, as he supposed, in perfect security.

Bob and Jim were acting as advance guard for the train and as they approached the farmhouse they saw the horses picketed in front.

Bringing his horse to a stop Bob said, "Jim, I don't like the looks of those horses there in front of that house."

"Neither do I. Looks like rebs."

Bob looked through his glass. "Rebs as sure as fate. It's all up with the train if there is any force."

The major in charge of the train now came up and asked what the trouble was.

"Rebs ahead," answered Bob.

The major looked through the glass. "Right you are. This will make a fight for us if they are not too many." He dashed back to order up the escort.

Two of General Stuart's staff were up and caught sight of the Federals.

"Soldiers coming down the Orange Court House Road," they reported to Stuart.

"It's Fitzhugh," replied Stuart yawning. "I'm glad he's come."

"It may be Lee," answered Captain Mosby, the aide who had spoken, "but it doesn't look like his command."

"You and Gibson had better go and see," replied the general without rising.

The aides mounted their horses and rode out to

meet the train. The major now had his force ready to defend the train, and as the two men came galloping towards them some of the men raised their guns to fire.

"Don't let them shoot, Major," cried Bob. "Let them come on and we will take them in."

The major started to give the command, but some of the eager soldiers had already fired and the aides wheeling their horses dashed back at full speed. Bob and Jim were after them far in advance of the rest.

As the two officers neared the house, they started yelling, "Yankees! Yankees! For God's sake, run, General."

General Stuart heard the din. Fortunately his horse was saddled and bridled. Springing from his couch without hat or coat, he ran for his horse and jumping on, was away. Bob and Jim after him.

The general and his officers were on splendid horses, but the pursuit was so close they only escaped by wheeling their horses and jumping a fence by the side of the road. The horses of Bob and Jim refused to take the fence, and the men escaped. All the Yankees had to show for the episode was the general's coat and hat.

Hardly had the train crossed the river than the Confederate cavalry came up in force, but it was easily driven back by the Federal artillery on the other side.

At the house where General Stuart had stopped, Bob got hold of a Richmond paper containing a list of the killed and wounded at Cedar Mountain, and to his horror found among the severely wounded the name of General Howard Clayton, his uncle.

After the death of his parents when he was six years of age, Bob had made his home with his uncle, and that was how he came to be in Virginia at the outbreak of the war, a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute.

Bob's espousal of the Union cause had been a sore trial to his uncle, but their love was still as strong as ever, and to know his uncle was wounded caused Bob bitter pain. Still it might be for the best, as it would keep his uncle out of the battle that was impending.

All of Lee's army was now opposing Pope, and the Army of the Potomac was already arriving to reinforce him.

The two armies began moving up the Rappahannock, the Federals on one side of the river, the Confederates on the other. At times a furious cannonading would take place, and several attempts of the Confederates to cross were frustrated.

Lee now decided on a movement which for it's daring had not been equaled during the war, a movement which if he had not held the ability of the Federal generals in contempt he would never have made.[1]

The plan was to detach Jackson's corps from the rest of the army, have it go up the river secretly, cross over and strike boldly for Manassas Junction, which would place him squarely in the rear of the Federals. This would put Jackson sixty or seventy miles from the rest of the Confederate army and expose him to an attack from the whole Federal force;

[1] It is said that the only times Jackson was ever seen to smile were when the names of the Union generals were mentioned.

but Lee was ready to take the risk, and Jackson was eager to make the movement.

Jackson's corps was known as the "Foot-Cavalry," on account of the long marches they could make, and well did they deserve the name.

To conceal Jackson's movement, Lee ordered Longstreet to make strong demonstrations of forcing a passage across the river and keep up a furious cannonading. The plan worked. For two days the Federals' attention was all on Longstreet, and by that time Jackson was well on his way.

While this was going on, General Stuart made a daring raid in the rear of the Federal army, succeeding in penetrating as far as Catlett Station, Pope's headquarters. Here he captured the headquarter's train and with it the personal ambulance of General Pope. In it was the general's baggage, among which was a splendid new uniform. So in exchange for his hat and coat, Stuart got a fine uniform and felt more than even.

The most serious loss was the capture of Pope's dispatch book, which gave Lee correct information of the greatest value as to the location of the different Federal corps.

While Longstreet kept the Federals busy, Jackson marched up the river, crossed without being observed and started straight for Manassas Junction, sixty or seventy miles away. His route led through Thoroughfare Gap which he found unguarded.

Jackson made the tremendous march in two days, and before Pope woke up, was in possession of Bristoe Station and Manassas Junction with all their enormous stores.

After the Federals had crossed the river Bob and Jim were ordered to scout north of where the armies were contending across the Rappahannock. Pope had an idea that Lee might attempt a secret crossing higher up, but had no idea he would attempt the bold move that he did. Pope imagined his rear perfectly safe.

When Bob and Jim reached the scene of action Longstreet was in the midst of his big show of attempting to cross the river. Bob watched a while and then said, "Jim, I believe that is all a sham. I cannot see that they are making any real attempt to get across. This is to cover up some other movement. The quicker we get off on our scout the better."

"There is sure some deviltry up," replied Jim.

To prepare for the scout the boys dressed in rough country clothes, much the color of the uniforms worn by the Confederates. They carried cartridge boxes and guns, and would readily pass as rebels.

Once out of the Union line the boys kept to the woods and succeeded in reaching Salem without accident. The sound of cannonading in their rear grew fainter and fainter, and at length ceased altogether.

"I wonder what that means," said Bob.

"Got tired of wasting ammunition, I suppose," answered Jim.

"Suppose Lee fooled with us as long as he wished, and is now ready to try some other game," replied Bob.

They now reached the road that led east from Salem through Thoroughfare Gap directly to Manassas Junction.

Bob decided to interview one of the natives whom he saw approaching. He was an old man and stopped short when he saw the boys and seemed inclined to run away, but Bob made friendly motions to him to come on.

"Who be yo'uns an' what yo'uns doin'?" he asked rather timidly as he came up.

"Confeds scoutin' fer Yanks. See any?"

"Nary a Yank," answered the old fellow, "but a heap of our own men past heah two days ago."

"Jackson's men?" queried Bob.

"Yas, I heerd some of the sojers say they be Jackson's men," was the answer.

The stupendous move in progress dawned on Bob. He was astonished and dumbfounded at the boldness of the movement. As far as he knew, not an inkling of the move had reached Pope. It was a complete surprise.

Thanking the old man Bob said they must be going. No sooner were they out of hearing than Bob explained the situation to Jim and added, "We must get back with the news as soon as we can. I am afraid it is too late to do much good, though."

The boys had gone but a short distance when they met a cavalry scouting party. Telling the officer in charge the news to carry back, the boys decided to keep right after Jackson. Dressed as they were they would readily pass as Confederate stragglers. In the rapid march some of the men must have fallen by the way.

The boys decided to try to reach Thoroughfare Gap by night. Bob said, "Let's throw away our useless guns and cartridge boxes. We can travel faster

without them. Be assured the rest of the rebel army will be right at our heels."

"How will we account for not having our guns if we meet any inquisitive reb?" asked Jim.

"We will stick our revolvers in our belts," answered Bob. "Leave the rest to me. Stragglers are not apt to question us closely."

The boys moved at a rapid gait. They met half a dozen stragglers, poor fellows who seemed half dead. Three of them were without shoes and their feet were bleeding. They seemed bewildered, and did not know whether to go on or turn back.

To their questions Bob answered, "We can't stop. We'uns hev orders to overtake Jackson. As fur yo' pore fellows, I would take it easy. The rest of the army will be along before long."

The sun was sinking in the west when Bull Mountain loomed up before them.

"We had better not make the gap," said Bob. "Some of Jackson's men may be guarding it." So they turned aside and aimed to strike the mountain about a mile from the gap.

Jackson left no guard at the gap, and since he had passed, it had been occupied by Federal troops, but of course the boys did not know this.

It was dark when they reached the foot of the mountain, and the boys decided to camp until it grew light. They made camp and ate sparingly of hard crackers and bacon. Then Bob offered to take the first watch.

Jim had become very taciturn and depressed in spirits. During the meal he had hardly spoken, now he said, "I don't want to sleep. Yo' lie down."

"His superstition about Jackson is still with him," thought Bob. "Maybe he is right, but to me it looks as if Jackson were putting himself in a mighty close hole."

Just then an owl set up its dismal hoot.

"Bob, Bob! do you hear that?" exclaimed Jim.

"Certainly I heard it. It's only an owl."

"It means bad luck, Bob. If I go on a scout and an owl hoots before me I allers turn back. It's a warnin'."

"Jim, you are full of superstitions," laughed Bob. "Try and get rid of such foolish ideas."

Jim was a little hurt and said earnestly, "Bob, I know yo' be larned, and don't believe as I do, but if yo' had been raised in the mountings as I was, yo' wouldn't talk as yo' do. Yo' ought to hear my ole grandma tell of the signs, and they all come to pass. Yo' don't believe in hants, but I do for I saw one as I tole yo'. Now when I heard Jackson pray, I knowed we was going to get licked, and as sure as yo're born the hootin' of that ole owl tells me we're going to get licked agin."

Bob was going to laugh at Jim but he thought better of it, it would only hurt his feelings, so instead he said, "Lie down, Jim and take a sleep. You are tired now. In the morning you'll look at things differently."

"I told yo' I didn't want to go to sleep," Jim replied. "I'm not sleepy, couldn't go to sleep if I tried. Yo' lie down, Bob. When I git sleepy I'll wake yo'. I sure can't sleep now."

Bob thought best to humor him and lay down, but it was a long time before he could go to sleep.

The events of the day crowded in upon him. Where was Jackson? What was taking place? If Jackson was at Manassas Junction another battle much greater than the first might be fought upon that fatal field.

He could just see the dim figure of Jim. He sat as motionless as a statue, his head bent forward as if in deep thought. In spite of his strong mind, Jim's superstition began to trouble Bob. The wild stories he had heard told by the negroes came back to him. He could still hear the mournful hooting of the owl. He knew there was trouble ahead, but it seemed to him that Jackson had gone to his destruction. How could he resist the whole Federal army? If he came out victorious, Jim must be right. God was surely helping him fight his battles.

At last Bob slept, and as he slept he dreamed. He was once more on the battle field of Bull Run. But there was no battle, no charging columns, no thunder of cannon and groans of the dying. Instead, there was not a living creature in sight. The landscape lay stretched out before him bathed in the pale light of the moon, still there seemed to be no moon. A silence as of death brooded over the scene. As he gazed, a mist began to rise, hardly discernible at first, but it grew thicker and heavier until the landscape was blotted out. Then the mist began to hold spectral forms, dim, seeming a part of the mist itself.

They multiplied in numbers until there seemed to be a host. Slowly they drifted past, their heads bowed, their hands wringing as if in agony.

Suddenly the fog was swept away as by a mighty

wind, and there came to his ears a great moan, a moan as if hearts were breaking, a moan as of a thousand souls in despair. Bob sprang to his feet fully awake. He was trembling and drops of perspiration stood on his forehead.

A strong wind had arisen, and was rushing up the mountainside causing the forest to moan and shriek and wail.

"What's the matter?" asked Jim. "Yo' jumped up as if yo' were skeered."

"I was. I had a bad dream. It must have been the wind."

"It cum up all of a sudden," said Jim, "and went roarin' up the mountain like a thousand devils."

"It sounded worse than that to me," answered Bob. "It was like — like — well I hardly know what. Jim, you lie down and sleep. I can't sleep any more."[1]

Jim lay down and was soon fast asleep. Bob sat watching and wondering what the day would bring. The wind died down and the forest ceased to moan; only a gentle breeze stirred the leaves making low music.

[1] There was nothing strange or unusual in Bob's dreaming as he did. He went to sleep with his mind filled with misgivings as to what might be taking place on the plains of Manassas Junction. Then the superstitions of Jim had led him to think, in a way, of the supernatural, and the wind did the rest.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT TOOK PLACE AT MANASSAS JUNCTION

AS SOON as it began to grow light the boys were up, but the mountain was so steep and rocky, they had to wait until it was fully light before attempting to climb it.

The climb was an arduous one but at length they stood on the top. The view was magnificent. The sun, just rising, flooded the hills and tree tops with its golden beams, while the valley still lay in shadows. As it climbed higher, the whole landscape was brought into view. Here and there could be seen the scars wrought by the rough hand of war.

To the east and a little to the south, far away, a dark cloud of smoke hung on the horizon, and the low muttering of distant artillery came to their ears.

Bob's heart sank as his dream came to him in all its weirdness. Was another battle being fought on the old field of Bull Run? If so, Jackson ought to be crushed for he was at least two days ahead of possible help.

Bob's gaze now fell to the base of the mountain and he saw troops moving as if to protect the mouth of the gap. His heart thrilled, for over them was waving the Union flag. If Longstreet was to be kept from reinforcing Jackson this was the place to stop him.

He saw cannon planted to command the mouth of

the gap and shell the side of the mountain if Longstreet attempted to pass his infantry over. But to Bob the force seemed pitifully small for the object intended.

"What shall we do?" asked Jim. "Stay here or go down and jine the troops?"

"Stay here by all means. If the general in command knows his business he will send a force up here to occupy the top of the mountain. But his force seems very small."

"It is small, but more troops may be coming," replied Jim.

The sounds in the distance still continued.

"It's a battle sure," said Jim.

"Let's hope that Jackson is being crushed," answered Bob.

Jim shook his head. "The hootin' of that owl last night meant no good," he answered slowly, "and God, he be with Jackson."

"Jim, stop that croaking," cried Bob thoroughly disgusted. "You make me tired with your foolish superstitions. Longstreet is far away. He can be stopped here, and Jackson will be crushed."

"Longstreet can't be stopped with those few men. Do yo' see any more coming?" asked Jim doggedly.

In spite of himself Bob felt a sinking of his heart. He strained his eyes but no more Federal troops were in sight, and Longstreet was much nearer than he supposed. Lee had moved his army up the river after Jackson crossed, and now was rushing his army forward to his aid.

The boys saw a cloud of dust in the west. It came nearer and nearer and soon a regiment of cavalry

appeared. It was the vanguard of Lee's army. When they reached the mouth of the gap a sputtering of rifle shots was heard and the cavalry hastily fell back.

"Didn't get through as easily as they thought," chuckled Bob.

The officers in command of the cavalry now appeared to hold a consultation and then a portion of the force spread out and began to ride along the base of the mountain. As there was no evidence that the top of the mountain was occupied a few of the cavalrymen dismounted and began to climb.

"We have only our revolvers, but let's give those fellows a scare," said Bob.

The boys made their way, keeping under cover, to where it looked as if the cavalrymen would come up. They waited until they came close, and they could see them pulling themselves up by the bushes and swearing loudly over the hard climb.

The head of one now appeared above a rock and Bob fired. The bullet struck the rock close to the man's head. Some of the splintered particles must have been thrown in his face. In his surprise the cavalryman lost his footing and went rolling down the mountain, and the others in their hurry followed suit. Jim to add to their consternation sent two or three balls down in their midst.

"Hey there!" shouted Bob. "Are you fellows drunk or are you practicing gymnastics?"

"Take that, you blamed Yank," cried one of the troopers shooting at them.

"Say, Bob," Jim drawled in a voice that could be heard by them, "what kin them fellers be shootin'

at?" Then he yelled down, "Bet yo' a dollar yo' can't hit the side of the mounting."

For reply several shots came.

"Jest see that," shouted Jim. "Didn't even hit the side of the mounting. They all went over."

The disgusted cavalrymen fired no more but made their way back. The commander of the cavalry believed the top of the mountain to be defended, and waited for the infantry to come up. Soon they came, long lines as far as the eye could reach.

In the meantime, the Federals had sent a line of skirmishers up the mountain. The major in command had been greatly surprised to find the boys there. "I thought I heard firing," he said, "but concluded some of our men had occupied the mountain unknown to us."

Longstreet came up and scanned the mountain with his eagle eye, and soon columns of infantry were moving right and left and a line of battle was formed along the base of the mountain.

The officer in command of the cavalry had reported that the summit of the mountain was occupied by the Federals, but he did not believe in any great force.

A strong line of skirmishers was now sent forward and slowly began to climb the mountain.

"We can never withstand them. They are too many," said the major. "But we will hold them as long as we can."

Like a great snake the skirmishers came on. Soon there was a popping of firearms, but the line came on until the summit was nearly reached. Then the commander shouted, "Boys, you can tell by their fire that their line is weak. Charge!"

The Federals heard the order, fired a volley, and then retreated in haste. When the Confederates attempted to follow, the Federal cannon opened and they were compelled to fall back out of range.

Longstreet knew he could pass infantry over the mountain here only with great labor and at a big disadvantage, so he sent scouts carefully to examine the side of the mountain to see if they could not find some better place. It was nearly night when they returned with the information that they had found two such places. Longstreet made preparations to start through in the morning.

The Federal commander heard with a grave face that all Longstreet's force was before him. "We will hold on as long as we can," he said, "but that will not be long unless reinforcements come. There should be a corps here by morning."

During the night an aide, his horse covered with foam, rode into camp and inquiring for the commanding officer, handed him a paper. The officer read it and his countenance fell. Instead of telling him that reinforcements were on the way it was an order from McDowell telling him to fall back.

The only place where Longstreet could be held back was to be given up without a struggle. It was as if McDowell said to the enemy, "Come on. The way is open."

With heavy hearts the little force withdrew. Strict silence had been enjoined, and it was not until morning that Longstreet knew there was no foe in front and his army pressed through with the cry, "Stonewall! Stonewall! We're coming!"

Bob could hardly believe his ears when informed

that the order was to retreat. He knew now that nothing could prevent Longstreet from reaching Jackson. What was more, it meant a divided Union army against a united Confederate one, for he was certain that all the Army of the Potomac had not arrived.

Day came and still they marched. There was no stop, no stay, for they knew that Longstreet was thundering at their heels.

From the direction of Manassas Junction came the sound of battle. Jackson was still fighting. He had not been overpowered.

The commander of the little retreating force, fearing that he might run into Jackson, kept well to the south, so when the Union lines were reached they were well to the south of where the battle was raging.

Bob found the road blocked with moving troops and immense trains. He inquired for Pope's headquarters, but none could tell. He was very anxious to know whether his brother's brigade was engaged in the battle or not, but none could answer. All he could learn was that only two corps of the Army of the Potomac were up, the other three corps were back. Pope was fighting the battle at tremendous disadvantage.

Bob learned that there was great dissatisfaction among the officers. Many of the generals openly berated Pope, causing the soldiers to lose confidence in him. Bob thought he could see defeat on the face of everyone he met. He overheard a group of officers discussing the situation and some were swearing, saying McClellan's generals were sulking — did not seem to care if Pope was defeated.

Bob could not believe this; he believed that the soldiers who had fought so bravely on the Chickahominy would do their duty here.

Night fell, and the boys found themselves mixed in a hopeless blockade of troops and wagons. The train blocked the road so there was no moving, and the darkness was so dense that it might be said it could be felt. At last they gave up in despair and lay down for the night. In the morning they once more continued their seach for Pope's headquarters.

Seeing a general surrounded by a group of officers, Bob asked one of them if he knew where Pope's headquarters were, adding that he was a scout and had just come from Thoroughfare Gap.

"Is the gap held?" asked the officer, immediately interested.

"No, it was deserted night before last. Longstreet came right at our heels. You will have all Lee's army to fight today."

"General, do you hear that?" cried the officer, and he repeated what Bob had told him.

"It does not seem possible that Longstreet is before us," replied the general. "I can hardly believe it. Boy, come here and tell me about it."

Bob told all he knew. The general looked grave. "If you are correct," he said, "there are squally times before us."

Just then an orderly handed him a note. He read it and said, "The boy is correct. Longstreet is here. I am ordered to advance the division to meet him."

Bugles blew, officers shouted hoarse orders, and the men fell in. "Forward march! Double quick!" was the command, and away they went on the run.

Bob watched them with sad eyes. "Poor fellows! So many going to their deaths," he murmured, "yet not one falters."

It was when the battle had begun to roar in all its intensity that the boys at last located Pope.

He was surrounded by his staff, and aides were coming and going so it was some time before the boys got near him. After a time Pope caught sight of them and cried, "Oh, my boy scouts! What news?"

"I fear nothing but what you already know. We are in from Thoroughfare Gap. The force defending the gap retreated night before last and Longstreet—"

"Yes, I know," interrupted the general. "McDowell ordered the force in. Anything more?"

"Nothing," replied Bob. "Can we be of use to you here?"

"The time for scouting is past," replied the general. "It is fighting now. Report after the battle is over."

Just then an aide dashed up crying, "General, Porter is not in the place you assigned him last night. I do not know where he is."

Pope's face darkened. "If I lose this battle," he cried, "it will be because my orders are disobeyed. Porter shall pay for this, and pay dearly."[1]

[1] Charges were made against General Porter. He was court-martialed, found guilty of disobeying orders, cashiered and prohibited from holding any office in the United States.

In 1875, the whole case was reopened by Congress, and after a thorough review the verdict of the court-martial was set aside and General Porter was reinstated in office.

Bob heard the remark and was amazed that any officer could be charged with wilful disobedience. His whole desire now was to find his brother's brigade. Someone told him that at least one brigade of Porter's corps was at Centerville and the boys made their way there.

The battle was raging fiercely not more than two miles away. The wounded were streaming back by the hundreds and with them came hundreds of panic-stricken men, many of whom had thrown away their guns.

Bob's mind went back to the battle of Bull Run. Were the disgraceful scenes of that day to be repeated? The memory of his dream swept over him, but he brushed it aside. He knew that there would be thousands in both the North and South weeping and wringing their hands after this battle.

Jim viewed the panic-stricken men with contempt. "Cowards! They ought to be shot," he said. "But, Bob, the army be whipped. Don't yo' see it? I told yo' God was with Jackson."

"We are not whipped yet," replied Bob. "It is only a few who are running. Listen! By the sound, our lines must be advancing. Most of our men are standing firm."

Jim shook his head, saying, "Yo'll see."

Bob now caught sight of a brigade that seemed to be idly standing at arms. He knew it belonged to Porter's corps. It was a brigade that had won imperishable honor on the fields of Gaines's Mill and Malvern Hill. Bob knew the commanding officer. He was standing apparently at ease, surrounded by his staff.

"I can now learn where Clayt's brigade is," thought Bob and he made his way to the general.

Saluting him he asked, "Can you tell me where the brigade of General Hunter is?"

The general merely glanced at the roughly dressed boy, and snapped, "Get away. Don't bother me. This is no place for you."

"I am General Hunter's brother," answered Bob meekly.

The general looked more closely. "So you are," he said. "I did not know you. What brings you here?"

"I am just in from a scout and I want to find my brother's brigade."

"You don't want to go to him," exclaimed the general. "He is down there." He pointed to where the battle was raging the loudest and the smoke rising the thickest.

"That is just where I want to go," replied Bob. "I want to be by his side as I was at Gaines's Mill. Thank you, General." Bob turned away.

A colonel came rushing up. "General," he cried, "what are you doing? Why are you not in the battle? They need you there. Our men are hard pressed."

"Never mind," replied the general coldly. "I do not care. I am tired of being commanded by staff officers. What has Pope done that he should be made a major general? I hear that McClellan is to be restored to command. I only hope the rumor is true." [1]

[1] This officer afterwards rose to high rank and was considered one of the hardest fighters in the Army of the Potomac.

Bob heard the general with surprise and horror. To him it seemed impossible that any general could be so consumed with jealousy or hatred towards a commanding officer as to deliberately refuse to do his duty. Then he remembered the rumors he had heard that the officers of the Army of the Potomac were not supporting Pope. "It can't be true of Clayt, though," he thought. "He is in the thickest of the fight."

Jim during all this time had been standing viewing everything with a critical eye. "What's all those sogers down there doing?" he asked Bob pointing to the idle brigade.

"Doing!" cried Bob. "They're helping Lee win this victory. Their general is a traitor. Jim, he says my brother's brigade is where the fight is raging the hottest, and refuses to raise a finger to help him."

"I would plug that general for half a cent," replied Jim, fingering his revolver.

"I'm going to join my brother," said Bob. "I'll see for myself whether his brigade is doing its duty or not."

"I'll go with yo'," said Jim. "I'm tired of standing here and seeing them blamed cowards run back."

Away went the boys and soon were in the rear of where the fight was raging fiercely. From some wounded men Bob learned that his brother's brigade was in front. Soon they were where the cannon balls were crashing. The ground had been fought over

The author has never seen any explanation of his conduct. There is no doubt but that he had no faith in Pope and believed defeat inevitable, and he may have done as he did in order to save his brigade.

and the dead and wounded were scattered thickly over the ground. Bob shuddered, but went on.

Soon they began to hear the spiteful hiss of the Minies as they flew past. One went through the top of Jim's hat. He took it off, looked at it and replaced it, remarking, "Bob, I don't like this. If I could shoot back I wouldn't mind, but this is skeery. Gee whiz! See that!" A shell had struck a tree near-by and bursting scattered pieces of bark all over them.

Just then Bob caught sight of his brother. He was sitting on his horse as coolly as on parade, directing his men. He was ordering a charge, and with cheers the brigade rushed forward, driving the enemy back.

"Well done, my brave men! Well done! Now hold the ground!" Bob heard him cry. He was never so proud of his brother as at this moment. Here at least was one brigade of General Porter's doing its duty.[1]

"Go tell Captain Cleveland a little more cannister," Bob heard his brother say as he came up.

"Clayt," he cried.

General Hunter looked at him in amazement. "You here!" he exclaimed. "Where did you come from? For Heaven's sake get back!"

A shell had exploded just above their heads.

"I came to be with you," answered Bob. "How is the battle going?"

"We are holding it here, but I hear the left is giving way. They called on me a few moments ago

[1] All of General Porter's corps in the battle fought heroically and lost heavily. This can be said of all of the Army of the Potomac engaged.

for a regiment. I could not spare a man. But get back, Bob."

One of General Hunter's orderlies rode up and pitched from his horse, shot through the head. Bob sprang on his horse saying, "Here is my place and here I stay. Your orders, General."

General Hunter had been about to give an order to the man who was shot, he gave it to Bob instead.

Jim had been standing by not saying a word, but when he saw Bob go, he touched his hat and said, "General, I have never been in a right big fight. There must be a thousand cannon going. May I take the gun of that dead soger and jine the boys?"

"Yes, my brave boy, go," answered the general. "I wish I had more like you."

Jim grabbed the gun, filled his pockets with cartridges from the soldier's box and started on a run for the front, where he did valiant service. He did not come out entirely untouched, receiving a slight wound in the arm, which he declared was nothing.

The brigade held its position until night, but it was known that the army as a whole had been badly defeated, and soon orders came for them to fall back on Washington.

This time there was no Bull Run panic. With heavy hearts, but with courage unshaken, the soldiers once more found themselves in the entrenchments around Washington. None went back with a heavier heart than General Hunter. His brigade had fought splendidly and lost heavily.

On the way back the general asked Bob why he had come to him, saying it was wrong and had nearly taken his courage to see him in such danger.

"Clayt, I had to come," replied Bob. "Not only to be with you, but," and his voice shook, "I heard that the high officers of the Army of the Potomac were giving away the battle on account of their hostility to Pope. I couldn't believe it, but some of the stories were true." He then told his brother of the brigade that stood at Centerville and how the general had refused to go into battle.

General Hunter was thunderstruck. "I knew there was jealousy and dissatisfaction among the officers," he said, "but I never thought it would be carried so far."

The Confederates were wild with joy. It was the greatest victory they had won. They believed their independence was as sure as won, and Jackson was a greater hero than ever.[1]

[1] The battle of Manassas Junction, or Second Bull Run, was really a series of battles, known as Bristoe, Manassas, Groveton, Chantilly, and Ox Hill. It can be said it was one of the worst-managed battles on the Federal side in the whole war, for which Pope was not entirely to blame for he had much to contend against. That many of the officers in the Army of the Potomac were lukewarm in his support is well known; but it is also shown that the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac who were engaged in the battle fought nobly and bravely. There were only four divisions of that army engaged, and a loss of 4,728 tells with what valor they fought. The total loss of the Union army in the battle was 14,462, that of the Confederates 9,112.

CHAPTER VIII

THROUGH THE LINES

A YEAR and a half had passed since the clouds of war had gathered over the land, and the Army of the Potomac was where it had been in the beginning — around Washington.

The year 1862 had opened auspiciously for the Union cause. Fort Donelson, with its thousands of prisoners, had fallen; Shiloh had been fought and won; the Mississippi River had been opened as far as Vicksburg, and Admiral Porter with his fleet had smashed his way to New Orleans. It looked as if the war would soon be brought to a successful termination.

But a few short months had changed the outlook. Along the Mississippi, Grant was struggling to keep what he had gained. Buell had been driven from northern Alabama clear back to Louisville. The Peninsula Campaign, on which such high hopes had been placed, had proven a miserable failure. Now, crushed and broken, the Army of the Potomac had once more sought safety in the fortifications around Washington. No wonder gloom pervaded the entire North.

Around Washington the situation was critical. The army was torn with internal dissensions. High generals had been accused of little less than treason.

Pope had lost the confidence of the army and chaos reigned.

Then it was that the president of the United States, the noble-hearted Lincoln, the sad-eyed Lincoln, the true patriot Lincoln, laid aside all official dignity, and went to McClellan in person, and begged him to once more assume command of the whole army. It was the only way Lincoln could see to unravel the tangle. To the honor of McClellan, be it said, he did not refuse.

Perhaps there was no officer in the whole army more despondent than General Hunter. His corps commander had been accused of wilfully disobeying orders. Two other officers had been ordered before a court of inquiry to explain their conduct.[1] He felt that a stigma rested on all the officers of the army; not upon the soldiers for they had done all that soldiers could do under their miserable leadership.

While General Hunter sat a prey to his thoughts, Bob and Jim entered his tent. They were in high spirits, the reverses that had overtaken the army had not affected them.

"See that, Gineral," cried Jim, showing his arm. "Bob isn't ahead of me. Reckon he's not the only one who's shed his blood for his country."

"You didn't shed much, Jim," laughed Bob.

"Not much! Look there!" Jim pointed to a faint crimson stain showing through the bandage around his arm.

"Must have pricked your arm to make that," exclaimed Bob in a taunting tone.

"Poof! Where did yo' git *yo'r* scratch?" cried

[1] Franklin and Griffin.

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Jim. "In no battle at all. While I got mine in a battle, a whooping big battle."

"That you did, Jim," laughed the general, "and you can well be proud of that wound. The captain of the company in which you served speaks in the highest terms of you. Said if you would enlist in his company he would make you a corporal."

"That is more than I was ever offered," said Bob in a sad tone. "It is plain to me an ungrateful country has not appreciated my services."

At this there was a hearty laugh. The high spirits of the boys had had an effect upon the general, and he was more than glad they had come.

"What news, Clayt?" asked Bob.

"From what I can learn Lee is moving north. The general opinion is that he is going to invade Maryland, some think Pennsylvania."

"Then there will be something doing right away," said Bob.

"It looks like it," replied the general. "This much can be said of Lee—he lets no grass grow under his feet. We will have to fight whether we want to or not. A part of the army is already under marching orders."

This was good news to the boys, and that night they resolved on one of the most daring moves they had ever made. It was no less than to make their way through the Confederate lines, gain the Shenandoah Valley, and then make their way down the valley to Winchester.

It was Bob who first broached the idea, and Jim readily fell in with it. As the greater part of Lee's army was north, the boys believed they could sneak

through their lines around Manassas Junction. The valley gained, they would represent themselves as Confederate soldiers who had been wounded, and were on their way back to join the army.

"We kin do it, Bob, I know we kin," said Jim. "We have our wounds to show. Once through the lines it will be plain sailing."

"You know what will happen if we are caught," replied Bob. "I do not know as I ought to have suggested it."

Jim shrugged his shoulders. "I reckon I kin stand it if yo' kin. Haven't we risked our necks a dozen times?"

"That's so, Jim," answered Bob. "If you're willing to go, it's a go."

"Willing! I'm more than willing," cried Jim. "I'll enjoy the excitement."

Now Bob had reasons of his own for wishing to make the trip. He believed his uncle after being wounded had been taken to Mr. Somers' plantation near Staunton. Mr. Somers was a close neighbor of General Clayton in Winchester, and while that city was occupied by the Federals the wife and daughter of General Clayton spent much of their time at the Somers plantation.

The boys made their preparation secretly. Both had passes from General Pope as scouts, so they would have no trouble in getting through the Federal lines. Once through, their clothing was so much like the Confederate uniform that it would readily be taken for such. At this time of year they had little fear but that they would be able to forage for a living.

The next morning General Hunter noticed that Bob was not in his cot but he thought little of it, as Bob was frequently up early, scouting around to see what he could learn. Suddenly the general caught sight of a letter lying on the table addressed to him in Bob's writing. He picked it up and read to his amazement:

DEAR BROTHER:

Jim and I have concluded to take a little scout on our own hook. We did not tell you for I knew you would not let us go. Don't worry. We can take care of ourselves. May have a big story to tell you the next time I see you. Don't blame me, Clayt. Scouting is in my blood.

Your Brother,

ROBERT HUNTER.

General Hunter read and re-read the note with a gathering frown on his face. "Foolish boys, I wonder what they are up to," he muttered. "I told them the army was moving north and I suppose they are off to the front."

He changed his mind when during the day a letter was sent in from the outpost towards Centerville. It contained the boys' passes from General Pope and a note from Bob which read:

Too dangerous to take with us. Keep them for us until we return.

It dawned on the general that the boys intended to enter the Confederate lines and realizing the danger he groaned, "Oh, Bob, Bob, what have you done!"

The boys had no trouble in reaching the Union outpost.

"Is this the last outpost?" asked Bob of the officer in charge.

"The very last," replied the officer. "Nothing beyond us except rebs."

"Then I wish you would see that these passes get back to General Clayton Hunter. They will be rather dangerous things to carry where we are going."

"You don't mean to say you are going into the Confederate lines?" cried the officer in astonishment.

"That's just where we're going," replied Bob coolly.

"Of all the fools I ever saw," exclaimed the officer. "You must want to get hung."

"We may be fools," answered Bob, "but if we are, you are."

"What do you mean?"

"Were not you in the battle the other day?" asked Bob.

"Yes. Why?"

"And you ran the risk of getting killed?"

"Who could be in that hell-hole without running the risk of getting killed?"

"Were you not foolish in exposing your life?"

"I did it for my country."

"And what we are doing we are doing for our country. No risk that we run is too great if we serve our country."

"Give me your hand, my boy," cried the officer. "May you come back safe."

The soldiers crowded around the boys and with

many a handshake and "God speed you" they bade them good-bye.

When well out of the Union lines the boys halted for a consultation. "I believe that the most dangerous part of our journey is right before us," said Bob. "We must manage to get through the advance lines of the enemy without being seen. It will never do to be caught coming from the direction of Washington and pretending to be wounded rebs."

"That's right, Bob," replied Jim, "and I reckon we had better leave the road. There's no knowin' how close we may be to them."

There was no moon, but it was a starlight night, and they had no trouble in making their way although their progress was slow, for every few moments they would stop and listen for the slightest sound. In this way they made three or four miles without hearing or seeing anything.

In their scouts Jim always kept slightly in advance of Bob. Not only was his hearing more acute, but he seemed to see almost as well at night as by day.

They were making their way along the side of a field close to a wood when Jim gave a warning "'Sh!" and whispered, "I believe there is a picket post right ahead in the edge of the woods."

Throwing themselves on the ground, they crept cautiously forward and soon heard an angry voice exclaim, "Dan Smith, yo' lazy lout! get up or I'll prick you with a bayonet. Think I want to be half an hour waking yo'? Time to go on guard."

"Prick me with a bayonet and thar will be one less upstart of a corporal," cried another angry voice. "I haven't been asleep fifteen minutes."

"That's a good one. You've been asleep four hours. Time to go on guard, I tell yo'. Now git."

With many groans and curses the soldier rose and the guard was changed.

"That's luck," whispered Jim. "We know now just where the guard is located, and we can creep around him. Think he is half asleep anyway."

As stealthily as Indians the boys crept around the guard and soon were safe beyond him.

"That's one good job," said Bob. "I believe we might take the road now. If we hear anyone coming we can hide."

Several times horsemen came along the road, but the boys heard them in time to hide until they were past.

As the east began to grow rosy the boys looked for a hiding place. A little distance to their left was a wood and they made for it. Once within its shade they felt secure and sat down to rest and eat. Before they had finished eating the sun was up. To their right stretched open fields. Along the road they could see a small brigade of cavalry approaching.

"There must be quite a hill to the left and in front of us," said Bob. "See how much higher the trees rise there. From the summit we might be able to get some idea of where we are."

After walking about half a mile they gained an elevation where they had quite a view of the surrounding country.

"That smoke to the north and west," said Bob, "must be Centerville, and that line of smoke low on the horizon must mark the line of the railroad. Our

next job will be to get across that. Jim, I believe we can keep to the woods and make the railroad by night somewhere near Bristoe or Catlett. It will not do to attempt to cross the road in daylight, for it's sure to be alive with soldiers and slaves repairing it, but if we can get near we can cross in the darkness in comparative safety."

By keeping in the woods or crouching along fences the boys made fair headway, and near sundown gained a hill where they could overlook the valley through which the railroad ran. As they expected, the track swarmed with workmen.

"That means Lee is to occupy northern Virginia," said Bob. "I believe he is after Harper's Ferry."

"If Jackson goes for it, he'll get it," said Jim. "I tell yo', Bob, God be with him."

"Jim, you quit your foolishness," cried Bob. "You gave me a bad dream at Thoroughfare Gap because of it, and I don't want any more of them. Then remember we have General Howard, and he is as much of a praying man as Jackson."

"Is that so?" asked Jim brightening up. "Then perhaps God will hear *him*."

The boys lay in hiding until dark, carefully noting where the workmen went into camp. Among them were many negroes, and around their quarters a strong guard was placed.

"That's a place we want to avoid," said Bob. "Would it not be better to wait until the camp is asleep, Jim, before we attempt to cross?"

"No," replied Jim. "I believe the best time would be before they settle down for the night. They will have guards out and anyone [illegible] around after

all is quiet will excite suspicion. Right after supper will be the best time."

"I believe you're right, Jim. That's when we'll try it."

It was now dusk and the whole camp was busy eating. The boys stole closer and, as darkness grew, became bolder and at last mingled with the soldiers, but took care to keep where it was darkest. In this way they had no difficulty in making their way through the camp and were congratulating themselves on their easy escape when they were suddenly brought to a halt by a sharp challenge.

"Whar be yo' fellers goin'?" asked a voice, and before them they could see the dim figure of a guard.

"Jest takin' a little walk before we camp down," drawled Jim.

"Well, jest walk back and be quick about it. Too many fellers been walking out and fergettin' to walk back."

The boys retraced their steps for a short distance. "We will have to crawl through the line," whispered Bob. "We could rush the guard but that would raise an alarm and they would be after us."

Going a little to the left they threw themselves on the ground and began to crawl cautiously forward.

"Better keep an eye peeled," they heard the sentry they had tried to pass say to another. "A couple of fellers tried to pass me a minute ago and they may try it again. Reckon they was tryin' to sneak through."

"Now while they are talking," whispered Bob. Half bent over the boys started to cross, but they

made a little noise for one of the guards exclaimed, "Listen! I thought I heard footsteps."

The boys lay flat.

"If them fellers try to cross my beat they'll get a ball," said the guard, hurrying down the line, and peering through the darkness trying to see ahead of him. He did not look at his feet and stumbled over Jim. In a moment the boys were up and away.

There was no challenge and they heard the guard up the line call, "Dave, what is it? Did yo' fall?"

There was no answer.

"Dave, I say!" called the guard again.

Still no answer and he called loudly, "Corporal of the guard!"

The corporal came running.

The guard explained, and they started down the line, soon coming to the sentry feebly trying to regain his feet. He had an ugly cut on his forehead from which the blood was streaming. In a short time he recovered sufficiently to say he had tripped on something and fallen. That was all he knew.

"It's easy enough to explain," said the surgeon who dressed the wound. "See his gun is covered with blood. He tripped over something and fell, hitting his head on the gun."

When well out of hearing Bob said, "Jim, that was a tight squeak. You make a fine stumbling block."

"Huh! My side aches yet where he stubbed his toe against me. But he sure did take a tumble. Reckon it shook him up. He lay mighty still."

"The better for us," said Bob. "We got out of that scrape pretty slick."

Coming to a road leading in the right direction

they decided to take it as it was easy for them to avoid any horsemen. They traveled for more than half the night and then began to feel very tired and sleepy as they had had no sleep the night before.

"Jim, suppose we camp," said Bob.

"I'm more than willing."

Bob was glad to hear this for Jim seldom said anything about being either tired or sleepy. They found a place where they felt they would be secure and soon were sleeping soundly.

To their surprise when they awoke the sun was past the meridian.

"My! What a sleep," said Bob rubbing his eyes. "Jim, how are you?"

"All right, but mighty hungry."

"Have you any rations left? I have two crackers and a small piece of bacon."

"Not a crumb," answered Jim.

"There's a field of corn over there. We might be able to find some ears soft enough to roast."

They found not only corn but potatoes, and securing a liberal supply retired to a thick part of the wood where they built a fire and were soon eating their fill of the good things.

With the coming of night they made their way back to the road, and the next day crossed the Rapidan and were in what was known as The Wilderness.

Little did the boys think as they forced their way through the tangle of brush and briars that the time would come when this wilderness would become a hell; that death would lurk behind every bush and tree, and that the blood of thousands would drench the ground.

"This is wuss than the mountains," said Jim, wiping the sweat from his brow. "Will we ever get out of it?"

"I hope so. It certainly is fierce," replied Bob. "Who would think there was such a place as this in the heart of Virginia."

Jim suddenly stopped. "I smell smoke," he said. Then he sniffed and said, "I smell something more than smoke, something good to eat. Bob, it smells like chicken or turkey. Let's see, there ought to be wild turkey in a place like this."

Cautiously the boys made their way through the brush and soon came to a little clearing in the middle of which stood a tumbled-down log hut. In front of the hut was a fire over which hung a kettle from whence the smells came.

A soldier in a ragged Confederate uniform sat on a log near-by watching the cooking. Various garments hung around showed the place was inhabited by more than one.

"Deserters as sure as you live," whispered Bob. "They are making their home in this lonely spot. I wonder where the others are."

"Probably huntin'," replied Jim. "But, Bob, I must have a go at what's in that pot. The smell of it makes me wild." Jim smacked his lips at the thought.

"I feel I must have a share of it, too," said Bob. "What shall we do? Make ourselves known?"

"Don't like that idea," answered Jim. "There may not be enough for all, and then they might not be willin' to share. I hear the others comin'. Let's give them a scare. Git yo'r revolver ready."

Just then three men came in view and Jim yelled at the top of his voice, "Thar they be, boys, surrender, you rascals!"

The effect was electrical. The one on the log sprang as if shot, and made a dive for the brush. Jim commenced firing his revolver, and Bob joined in with him. For a minute one would think a whole company was shooting. The three just coming, turned like so many frightened deer, and instantly vanished.

The first thing Jim did was to rush to the kettle. "Turkey, by jiminy! And just about done."

The boys found not only the turkey but green corn and cornbread and half a fine ham. What a feast they had. When they left, they carried a liberal supply of the ham and cornbread with them.

At last they reached the end of The Wilderness and headed nearly due west, crossed the Blue Ridge, and found themselves in the Shenandoah Valley, only a few miles from Staunton.

They now traveled boldly as Confederate soldiers returning to their regiments after being wounded.

Bob inquired where Mr. Somers' plantation was and found it to be about three miles ahead. He also learned, as he expected, that his uncle was there.

"Now, Jim," he said, "I have work for you. I dare not show myself, so you will have to be my messenger."

"It's to see a gal, is it?" asked Jim.

"Yes, a beautiful one, and just as good as she is beautiful," answered Bob.

"None of yo'r high-toned gals for me. If I ever have a gal it will be one of my own kind o' folks."

Bob had to smile as he thought of Jim marrying one of the proud beauties of the F. F. V.

"I think you are right, Jim," he replied, "but remember there are two young ladies where you are going. One is my cousin, Helen Clayton, and the other is Miss Agnes Somers. It is to Agnes I wish you to deliver the note; and mind, let no one see you give it to her."

"How can I know which is the right one?" asked Jim.

"Helen is rather tall, and has blue eyes and brown hair. Agnes has eyes as blue as the sky, is of medium height, and her hair is like the golden sunshine."

"Gee! She must be pretty. Be she yo'r gal, Bob?"

"She is a young lady and I am nothing but a boy, but we are great friends. She stood by me when even my uncle and aunt and Helen disbelieved in me. Jim, do you think you can get my note to her without anyone knowing it?"

"Trust me," said Jim pocketing the note and starting on his way whistling.

CHAPTER IX

BOB MEETS AGNES

MR. SOMERS' plantation was one of the most beautiful in the Shenandoah Valley. On the west rose the Alleghanies, clad to the summit with pine, cedar, and laurel. The rich soil of the valley was groaning beneath its burden of crops — it was the storehouse from which the Confederates drew a vast quantity of supplies.

The Somers' had used this plantation for their summer home, but since Winchester had been occupied by the Union army they lived here all the time, and the wife and daughter of General Clayton had by invitation become inmates of the family; so it was here the general had been brought when wounded.

General Clayton had been shot through the thigh, and had come near bleeding to death, but the first of September found him convalescing rapidly. His great sorrow was that he was not with Jackson at Manassas Junction; and when news came that Lee was marching north to invade Maryland, tears came into his eyes and he cried, "And I must lie here like an old woman."

"You have done enough, Howard," said his wife gently, "and if you wish to get well quickly you must quit fretting."

He lay quiet for a time and then startled his wife by saying, "I wonder where Bob is?"

"I have heard nothing of him since he rescued Helen," she replied. "I wish I knew he was well and safe."

"Playing the spy probably, if alive," groaned the general.

"Howard, that charge of his being a spy was false, as you know."

"I know. Since then, however, he has done enough to hang him a dozen times," replied the general. "If he fell into my hands I would have to give him up."

"It was that false charge that drove him to the mountains and made him what he is," cried Mrs. Clayton, "and since he rescued Helen I would shield him if he played the spy a hundred times."

"My honor would compel me to give him up if it tore my heart out by the roots," groaned the general. "That is what Jackson would do. Clara, what you have said is treason."

"Treason let it be," retorted his wife; "but it would not be treason. The success of the South does not depend on his poor life."

"I know, but my honor would be at stake. I trust I will never see or hear from him as long as this war lasts. Never mention his name to me. I don't know why I have thought of him so much lately."

Late in the afternoon of that same day Helen Clayton and Agnes Somers were sitting on the porch enjoying the cooling breeze from the mountains. Had they known it, a pair of sharp eyes was watching them from a thick clump of bushes that grew by the side of the driveway leading to the porch.

Jim was about his errand and had got near with-

out being discovered. He knew which was Agnes, but how to get to her was the question. While he was pondering, the sound of a carriage came up the drive. He lay closer and as it drew near recognized the occupants.

"If it isn't Judge Cadwalader and his gal, as I live," he muttered. "Here's a go, for they'll know me sure."

Helen and Agnes ran to meet the arrivals, and while Agnes and Clarissa were hugging each other, Helen had time to welcome the old judge.

"How is your father?" he asked.

"Improving. He will be delighted to see you, Judge. The time passes so slowly for him. You can give him all the news."

"Just so, just so," replied the judge. "The news is good now. Lee is going to get Philadelphia sure. Nothing can stop him. The Yankees are scared out of their boots." The old judge rubbed his hands with great satisfaction.

Mrs. Somers and Mrs. Clayton now came to welcome the guests, and all went into the house. In a short time the three girls returned to the porch.

"Girls, I have a lot to tell you," cried Clarissa. "Father says I talk too much, but, bless you! I'd die if I couldn't talk."

"Talk all you want to, you dear girl," replied Agnes. "I love to hear you chatter. It's such a relief from what we mostly hear these days."

"In the first place," said Clarissa, "do you know that Caddie Robinson has gone into the army?"

"What! Caddie enlisted?" cried Helen and Agnes together, their thoughts going back to when they

saw him groveling and crawling at the feet of Black Dan.

"Yes, you know since that awful time when Helen was captured by Black Dan — "

"Don't speak of it," cried both girls, shuddering.

"Well, there's no use mincing matters. You know what a coward he proved. Although he is only a cousin, we felt the disgrace keenly. I wouldn't speak to him, and most of the girls cut him. His life has been so uncomfortable that he told father that if he could get him a commission he would go into the army. So father got him a second lieutenancy in a cavalry company and he has gone. He says he will make good or die attempting."

"I hope he will," exclaimed Helen. "You may be proud of him yet, Clarissa."

"I certainly hope so," replied Clarissa, "but I have reserved the greatest news to the last. You can't guess what it is."

"Don't keep us in suspense," cried Agnes.

"Well, father and I had an adventure about a month ago," answered Clarissa with a toss of her head. "Yes, a real adventure. Ever since you told me, Helen, how you were rescued from Black Dan by your cousin, Robert Hunter, I have been dying to meet him. Why he must be a second Chevalier Bayard. Father says I am too romantic, but I just dote on those knights and highwaymen who rushed to the rescue of their ladies fair. They were so brave and gallant. Oh, I just love them!"

Clarissa clasped her hands and rolled her eyes.

"Clarissa! Clarissa!" shrieked the girls. "You are too ardent. Go on, what's the rest?"

"About a month ago, father and I were returning from Gordonsville when we were stopped by two boys, roughly dressed and fully armed. I was sure they were highwaymen, and could have shouted, I was so glad to be having an adventure at last."

"Oh, Clarissa!" was all the girls could say.

"I was dreadfully disappointed when they told father that instead of being highwaymen they were scouts for General Jackson. One of them did all the talking. He was so nice that father told all he knew. While they were talking a company of our cavalry came riding up the road and those boys dove in the bushes, and that was the last we saw of them.

"Then the cavalry came up and when the captain asked him about it father told them what the boys had said, and you ought to have heard that captain swear. I pitied father. That captain called him an old fool and said he ought to be hung. 'Why,' he roared, 'don't you know those two boys were Yankee scouts, and you have told them just what they wanted to know? I ought to arrest you.'

"And father a judge! He hasn't got over the humiliation yet. Father didn't answer back, but I gave that captain a piece of my mind that he will remember for a time."

"I warrant you did," said Helen. "What is the rest?"

"Something that will interest you, Helen, for I am sure that the boy who did the talking was Robert Hunter."

"What!" cried Helen. "How do you know? You never saw him."

"From your description, I tell you it was Robert

Hunter. My! He did talk nice and was so polite. I just fell in love with him."

"Clarissa, don't say anything to father or mother about this," said Helen. "Robert's being a Yankee scout nearly killed father."

"Not a word," replied Clarissa.

Supper was now announced, and the girls went in.

Jim had lain in the thicket all the time. His first plan of going to the house and asking for something to eat was impossible after the coming of the judge. He noticed that at one end of the porch grew a thick vine, and he concluded to hide in it in the hope that the girls would come out again after supper.

He was not disappointed. The girls soon came back and took possession of the porch. Their chatter may have been interesting, but not to Jim. All he could think of was how to attract Agnes' attention. At last he rustled the vine a little. It was not noticed. He shook it more violently.

"I wonder what makes that vine rattle so," exclaimed Agnes rising and moving towards it. "I see nothing," she added giving it a shake. Then she stood as if petrified for she heard whispered faintly, "Robert Hunter;" then, "Here take this," and an arm held out a piece of paper. Then the vine rustled again and Agnes saw a dim figure steal out and around the corner of the house.

"What was it, Agnes?" asked Helen.

"Only a cat," she answered as soon as she could control her voice.

"Why, Agnes, you speak as if you were frightened," said Helen coming toward her, "and how you are shaking."

"It startled me when it jumped out so suddenly, but I am all right now." She began laughing and talking as if nothing had happened, keeping the note tightly clutched in her hand.

It was nearly bedtime before she found an opportunity to read it. Bob asked her to meet him at a certain place early in the morning if she possibly could, saying he dared not let his folks know he was near, and ending with, "but I can trust you. My life would not be worth a straw if it was known I was here."

The girl was terrified. How could she meet Bob without exciting suspicion? and what was he doing here? Then she thought he must be acting as a spy, and the thought made her angry. She had always contended that Bob was not a spy. If she met him she would be as bad as he. She wouldn't go. Then she cast that thought from her. She must go.

Stealing from the house she sought Tom, the gray-haired coachman who had served them all his life.

"Tom, I want you to do something for me," she said.

"What is it, Missy Agnes? Yo' know Tom do anything for his sweet Missy," he said, bowing and scraping.

"I want you to get up early, very early, before it is hardly light and have Zephyr saddled for me. Don't say anything to anyone. Be sure and don't let the boys know. It's a little secret I want to keep."

"I'll do it. Ole Tom'll keep still," answered the slave.

"Thank you, Tom. You will lose nothing by it."

When Agnes returned to the house she complained

of a slight headache, said she would go to bed, and that she was sure she could sleep it off by morning.

"Agnes hasn't been like herself since she found the cat in the vine," said Helen.

"What cat?" asked Mrs. Somers.

"This evening when we were sitting on the porch we heard a rustling in the vine at the end of the porch. Agnes went to investigate and a cat sprang out. It must have given her a nervous shock."

"Agnes is not very easily frightened," said her mother. "I am surprised that she should let a little thing like that upset her."

"We have all been on a nervous strain for the last few weeks," said Mrs. Clayton.

Hardly had the first signs of day began to show than Agnes quietly crept out of bed. She had slept very little. Hastily dressing, she slipped out of the house and found Tom waiting with her horse.

"Thank you, Tom," she said preparing to mount.

"Bless yo' chile," said Tom, "yo' be not goin' alone. I've a boss already to go with yo'."

"I prefer to go alone, Tom. I'm only going for a little canter. I'll be back in half an hour."

The old servitor looked after her and shook his head. "Dar be not like young Missy," he said. "If [illegible] happen to her ole Tom catch it."

[illegible] was not over a mile to the meeting place and [illegible] found Bob waiting for her.

"[illegible] Agnes, I knew you would come," [illegible] caught her hand and pressed it to his [illegible]

"Bob, why are you here?" she cried. "This is [illegible]"

"Agnes, I was hungry to hear of uncle and the rest. I read in a paper he was badly wounded. I wanted to hear how Helen and auntie were, and to see you."

"Is that all?" asked the girl coolly. "Are you not here to get information? In fact are you not here as a spy? a thing I have always contended you were not." The girl burst into tears.

"Don't, Agnes, don't," exclaimed Bob in distress. "This is the first time I have ever been within the Confederate lines. But it makes no difference. If caught, my punishment would be no greater than before. I shall certainly get all the information that I can now that I am here, but I would not be here if it were not to learn how my uncle was and to see you. Tell me all that has happened since I saw you."

She did so as rapidly as possible and then asked, "Bob, it was not you in the vine, was it?"

"No, it was Jim. Jim, come here."

Jim who had remained in the background came awkwardly forward, pulling off his cap.

"Jim, you gave me a start," said Agnes smiling, "but you certainly worked it fine. I had to fib. I said I saw a cat. But, Bob, I have a question to ask. Was it you who stopped Judge Cadwalader? Clarissa declares it was."

Bob laughed. "Clarissa is some girl. I'm sorry I had to leave her so abruptly. Give her my regards."

"That I dare not, but I may be able to sometime. Now I must go. I've stayed too long. I want you to promise me that you will not remain here a minute after I leave, that you will get out of this neighbor-

hood as soon as you can. You are not using your uncle or me right. I know he would feel that he would have to surrender you, and it would break his heart; and what would become of me if it were known I had this meeting with you? I might be looking out of a barred window. Not only that but disowned by my own people. They are very bitter against the Yankees."

"Great Heavens! Agnes, have I put you in danger? I had rather you would inform on me than have a hair of your head touched."

"Bob, do you mean that?" she asked a great tenderness in her voice.

"Yes, if it should ever come to that, which I do not think it will," replied Bob. "As much as I wished to see you and to hear about uncle, I am sorry now that I came. Forgive me, Agnes."

"There is nothing to forgive, Robert," she said gently, "but promise me you will not attempt such a thing again."

"I promise you," replied Bob.

"Then hurry away without losing a moment. Good-bye."

She touched the horse with her whip and was gone.

Bob watched her until she was out of sight, then said, "Jim we must be going. I did wrong in coming. If I have put her in danger, I can never forgive myself."

"Gee whiz! What a gal!" exclaimed Jim. "Bob, she certainly is wonderful."

Agnes rode swiftly home to find old Tom anxiously waiting.

"Tank de Lawd yo' be back!" he cried. "Tom be worried."

"I'm all right, Tom," answered Agnes. "But be sure and say nothing of this ride; father wouldn't like my going off alone."

"I keep still," replied Tom as he took the horse, but he went away shaking his head.

Mrs. Somers was up and surprised to see Agnes come in, asking where she had been.

"Just for a little canter, mother. I thought it would do me good and it has. I feel splendid. The morning air is so refreshing."

"Who went with you?"

"No one. Tom wanted to but I told him he needn't. I only took a short ride."

"Agnes, I am surprised. What will your father say?"

"Please don't say anything to him. I'll promise not to do it again, but this morning I felt I just had to have a little ride by myself. My! but I made Zephyr fly."

"Well, child, I'll say nothing about it this time, but don't ever take such a wild notion again."

Agnes threw her arms around her mother's neck and kissing her exclaimed, "You are such a kind, sweet mother." Then fled to her room.

Bob and Jim kept to the woods until they were several miles from the Somers plantation, then boldly took to the road, but they were careful to avoid meeting any soldiers and kept away from any villages.

By representing themselves as wounded soldiers returning to their regiments they never failed to re-

ceive food and kind treatment at the houses where they stopped. To the few soldiers they ran into, they said either that they were mountain boys in the valley on business, or members of some guerrilla band which they knew worked in that vicinity. In this way they got to within thirty miles of Winchester when something occurred which caused them to change their entire plans.

They were walking along the road when they suddenly met a Confederate major and two soldiers. They were splendidly mounted, and to have run would have meant being pursued so they put up a bold front and went ahead.

The major halted them, inquiring who they were.

"We'uns be only two mountain boys," replied Jim. "We'uns cum down to the valley to hear what Lee is doin'. They do say he be moah than smashin' them Yankees."

"You two boys are old enough and large enough to be in the army. Why are you not there?"

"Ike Mozingo's band be good enough fer me when I want to do any fightin'," said Jim.

"Ah! Belong to Mozingo's band do you?" exclaimed the major. "Do you know what my orders are? To arrest every guerrilla I find and forward him to the army where he can do better service for his country; so come along!"

Bob gave Jim a quick look and in a flash their revolvers were out. Bob covered the major, Jim the two soldiers.

"Hands up!" was the stern command.

The soldiers obeyed, but the major reached for the revolver in his belt.

Bob's revolver cracked and the major's arm fell to his side.

"Sorry to have to do it," said Bob, "but you gave me no other alternative. First, I will remove your weapons and then I'll help you dismount."

After removing the major's arms, Bob took a blanket from his horse and spreading it on the ground, helped the major, who was pale and trembling with pain, upon it. Then turning to Jim he said, "You disarm these men while I cover them."

Jim did so and then watched them while Bob looked after the major's wound. It was a bad one just below the elbow. Bob found some material in the major's saddle bag with which he deftly bound the arm, saying, "That will do until you can see a surgeon. Now, major, let me give you a little advice. Never show fight when the other fellow has the drop on you."

"D— you!" roared the major.

"Don't get excited. It will cause your wound to bleed more," said Bob in a voice as gentle as a mother's soothing her child.

Jim went through the clothes of the two soldiers thoroughly and removed many things, among them some papers.

"Give them back everything but the papers," said Bob. "I will examine those."

In a moment he cried, "Jim, we are in luck. These fellows are couriers. Here are their details made out in due form. We can ride in style from now on. Now I'll see what the major has."

"You are not going to search me, are you?" asked the major, faintly.

"Certainly, but I will do it as gently as possible," replied Bob. "Make no resistance and you will not be hurt."

The major groaned, but made no reply.

Bob found a number of papers on him and began looking them over.

In the meantime Jim and the soldiers had been talking, and he had learned quite a little.

"Bob," Jim suddenly cried, "these fellows say our forces have evacuated Winchester and they think Harper's Ferry has been taken by this time."

"What!" exclaimed Bob in consternation, as it was for Winchester they were headed.

Jim repeated the information, and Bob turning to the major asked if it were correct.

"It is," he replied. "You fellows are behind the times."

"Well, I'll see what you have anyway," said Bob continuing to sort the papers. He soon found he had made a haul. The major, whose name was Hardcastle, had been engaged in gathering up stragglers and recruits and forwarding them to Lee's army. Bob found reports of the number of troops left in the valley, which were but few, as every man that could be spared had been sent to aid Lee in his invasion of Maryland. In the major's pocketbook was a dispatch from Richmond reading:

Send all information you have to General Lee by courier. His army is in northern Maryland. Harper's Ferry should be taken by this time.

"I am more than obliged for these papers," said Bob. "They contain a heap of information."

The major smiled grimly. "You are welcome to them for all the good they will do you. A few days ago they would have been priceless to McClellan, but now they are worthless. The battle will be fought before you can possibly reach the Yankee lines, and McClellan will be a whipped man. Lee's army is squarely between you and McClellan. How are you going to get through?"

Bob saw the force of the major's remarks. "Jim, we will have to change our plans," he cried. "We will have to take to the mountains. Once in them we can snap our fingers at all of Lee's army."

"Reckon yo' be right," drawled Jim.

Bob now turned to the soldiers saying, "Boys, I am sorry but I shall have to ask you to shed your coats. It will not do to be seen riding these fine horses in such old clothes."

Hats and coats were quickly exchanged and Bob then advised the soldiers, as soon as he had left, to go to the nearest town for a conveyance for the major. "I would leave you the major's horse," he said, "but you might be on our trail quicker than we desire. Jim, shoot the poorest horse."

This done the boys started, Bob calling, "Good-bye, boys! Good-bye, Major! I hope the wound does not prove serious;" then to Jim, "Now for the mountains."

"Be yo' really goin' to the mountings?" asked Jim.

"No, that was for a blind. We are going straight to Harper's Ferry. I have papers here that would take us through the whole rebel lines if we wished to go. Now, Jim, we'll have to ride."

Bob had arranged his papers in a bundle with the dispatch asking that reports be sent by courier on the top. They dashed through village and town at high speed. If halted, Bob had merely to show his bundle of papers and they were dismissed with a wave of the hand.

"Say, this is the greatest ride I ever took," chuckled Jim. "It pays to be a good reb."

Through the rest of the day and the night they rode, and morning found them but a few miles from Harper's Ferry.

"Hark!" suddenly exclaimed Bob. They checked their horses and listened. A distant thunder of artillery was heard.

"Harper's Ferry has been attacked!" cried Bob. "We shall have to hurry."

The boys put spurs to their weary horses and dashed on.

CHAPTER X

HARPER'S FERRY

FOR a time the boys rode in silence, the thunder of artillery growing more distinct.

"I do not think that firing is at the Ferry," Bob said at length. "It is over on the Maryland side. At Maryland Heights probably. The Heights is the key to the Ferry. Jim, what if we find the place surrounded. Perhaps we will have to deliver our dispatches to General Lee after all. Then it's good-bye for us."

"Had good luck so far," replied Jim, "but we will have to be keerful."

But they here unexpectedly ran into a company of Confederate cavalry that debouched from a cross-road. With them they had a motley crew of stragglers they had picked up. The boys had noticed in their ride that the country was full of straggling soldiers from the Confederate army. They had been marched until exhausted nature had given out. A pitiful looking set they were, all in rags, many of them shoeless.

The boys were too close to run, so they rode boldly forward.

"No use running," said Bob. "Our credentials ought to hold, but I don't like it. Come what may, Jim, don't surrender."

"Better be shot than hung," replied Jim, and Bob noticed his hand was in his bosom clutching his revolver.

"Halt!" commanded the captain of the company as they came up. "Who are you and where are you going?"

"Couriers with dispatches for General Lee," replied Bob. "Do you know the quickest road to take to him? I hear cannonading. Is Harper's Ferry in our possession?"

"Harper's Ferry is not taken yet," replied the captain, "but I hope it soon will be. It seems a little queer you should be here carrying dispatches to Lee. You seem to be heading for Harper's Ferry instead of for Lee. Where are you from?"

"We came through from Staunton. Our dispatches were given us by Major Hardcastle," replied Bob.

"You should have gone by way of Winchester and from there to Martinsburg," replied the captain. "Let me see the dispatches."

"My instructions were to deliver them to Lee in person," answered Bob. "Here is the package they are in. You can see it is all right. As for coming this way, the major thought the Ferry would be taken by the time we got here."

The captain looked at the envelope and said, "That is an official envelope all right, but you will have to go around the Ferry. In all probability you will meet Jackson on your way. Your best plan would be to go by this road." He pointed to a road leading to the west. "After riding about two miles you will come to a road leading north that will take you past

the Ferry some three or four miles from it. You may run into Jackson's advance any time."

"That will be as good as finding Lee," said Bob. "Come on Jim. We have no time to lose. Thank you, Captain." The boys turned up the road indicated.

"Whew!" said Jim, "I thought for a while that we were in for trouble."

"That captain was suspicious all right," laughed Bob, "but he couldn't get around our credentials. But we must get back on that road we were on. Let's turn here and circle back through the woods."

They did so and soon were back on the road. "Now we must make time," said Bob. "I think our troubles are over. We must be near the outposts."

Bob was mistaken. They came onto a Confederate officer sitting by the side of the road apparently drawing a map. A trooper on a horse near-by was looking on. The officer looked up in surprise and exclaimed, "Why, boys, where did you come from? Don't you know half a mile farther will take you plumb into the Yankee outposts?"

Saluting the officer, Bob said, "We must have got off the road. We met Captain Bevins some ways back, and he directed us. He must have been mistaken."

"Where were you going?"

"To meet the advance of General Jackson. We have dispatches for General Lee."

The officer sprang to his feet and his hand flew to his revolver. Quick as he was, Bob was quicker. "Another motion and you die," he cried. Jim was as quick in covering the trooper.

For a moment the officer's hand trembled on the butt of his revolver, then he slowly raised his hands above his head. "I suppose I must do it," he said with a grim smile. "I don't want to be served as you served Major Hardcastle. The telegraph is swift, and there is a troop of cavalry looking for you boys. I suppose you have those dispatches yet."

"Certainly," replied Bob. "I expect to deliver them to General Lee as soon as McClellan captures him."

The officer laughed. "Why, my boy, McClellan is so slow he couldn't capture a tortoise."

"Jim, disarm the trooper and then this officer," said Bob. "Keep the soldier covered while you are doing it. I will look after the captain."

Jim did as requested.

"Now, Jim, that map the captain was drawing."

The captain bit his lip but said nothing. He kept casting frequent glances at the woods behind him and seemed desirous of holding Bob in conversation. "That was a cute trick you played on Major Hardcastle," he said. "Tell me about it."

Bob was inclined to banter a little with the captain, but Jim let nothing escape his attention, and his keen ear caught the sound of someone breaking through the bushes.

"Bob, a party of soldiers be comin' through the woods," he cried.

Bob struck his horse with his spurs crying, "Captain, I ought to shoot you for this, but I won't."

A moment later a party of a dozen soldiers headed by a lieutenant broke through the bushes into the road.

He slowly raised his hands above his head

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"Shoot!" cried the captain, pointing to the disappearing boys.

A futile volley was fired.

The boys found the captain had told the truth for they had ridden but a short distance when they ran into a Federal picket who halted them. They had heard the volley fired at the boys and stood ready for an attack.

"Are you deserters?" asked the sergeant in charge of the post as the boys rode up.

"No, we are Federal scouts," answered Bob. "Who is in command here?"

"Colonel Miles," replied the sergeant. "Were you fellows pretending to be rebs?"

"Sure! They found us out, and we had a tight squeeze to get through. Do you know that Jackson is surrounding this place?"

"We are aware of it. Don't you hear the firing on the Heights? But I think we can hold them, we have a large force," replied the sergeant.

"Any news from McClellan?" asked Bob.

"None at all. I will have to send you boys back under guard. Here comes a regiment to relieve us."

A regiment was forming a line in the rear and already a line of skirmishers was advancing.

"Why, it's the Sixty-fifth Illinois, Colonel Cameron!" cried Bob. "I reckon the colonel will vouch for us, Sergeant."

As the regiment came up the sergeant saluted the colonel and said, "Colonel, here are two boys who just rode into our lines. They claim to be Union scouts, and that they know you."

The colonel turned, stared at the boys for a moment, then cried, "Bob Jones and Jim Kidder as I live! Where did you come from, boys?"

"Straight from the enemy. Can't you see from our clothes that we are good rebs?" laughed Bob.

"What news?" asked the colonel.

"Jackson is surrounding the place. Here is a map we took away from a Confederate officer."

Colonel Cameron looked at the map. "It has the roads marked," he said. "We will soon be attacked on this side. Wait until I get my line established. I want to talk with you. You must go with me to Colonel Miles."

Having established his line the colonel came back and they started for Colonel Miles.

"Colonel, what is the situation here?" asked Bob.

Colonel Cameron shook his head. "I don't like it, Bob," he replied. "To my mind Colonel Miles don't know what he is about. I only came last night. As you see, Maryland Heights is the key to the situation. I wanted to take my regiment there and Colonel Miles consented, but just as we were ready to march he changed his mind and sent us here instead and sent the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth New York in our place. That regiment is a new one, green as they make them."

"How about the brigade commanders?" asked Bob.

"White, Ford, and D'Utassy. I am placed in D'Utassy's brigade. He seems alive to the situation and likes it no better than I do. White and Ford I have little use for. Like Miles they seem bewildered, but Ford is not well — here we are."

Colonel Cameron introduced the boys to Colonel

Miles saying, "Colonel, these boys are just in from the front. They are two of the best scouts I ever knew."

Colonel Miles asked rather listlessly, "What news have you?"

"You are being surrounded by Jackson's army," replied Bob.

The colonel grunted, "I know that," and turned away, paying them no more attention.

Colonel Cameron looked on in disgust. "Colonel Miles," he said, "the skirmishing seems to be heavy up on the Heights. Would it not be well for you to change your mind, and allow me to move my regiment up there? Remember, most of the troops there are new. If we lose the Heights, Harper's Ferry is lost."

"You will stay where you are," snapped Miles. "Colonel Ford says he can hold the Heights against any force."

"You see how it is," said Colonel Cameron to Bob as they left the colonel. "I understand the Heights are not fortified although Miles had orders to fortify them days ago. I sometimes think — "

He stopped short and then said, "I had better not say what I think. I may be wrong, but I don't like it. I am afraid I have brought my regiment into a trap. I would like to know the real situation on the Heights."

"Why not have Jim and me go?" asked Bob.

"Just the thing," replied the colonel. "I will write a note to Colonel Ford introducing you."

The note and a pass were written. "Report back as soon as possible," said the colonel.

The boys rode across the bridge, and part way up the Heights they found Colonel Ford. He was by the battery, not up where the firing was. As Colonel Cameron had said, he looked anything but a well man.

When Bob presented the note the colonel read it and said testily, "Both Colonel Cameron and Colonel D'Utassy seem very much concerned over the Heights. There is no danger. I can hold them."

Just then Colonel Sherrill of the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth New York was brought back severely wounded. He seemed to be more distressed over his regiment than his wound.

"Colonel, I have had hard work to keep my men from breaking," he moaned. "I am afraid the regiment will not hold."

"The regiment has other officers to keep it in order," replied Colonel Ford.

"I have little confidence in any of them except my adjutant. He will do all he can," said Colonel Sherrill.

Bob thought Colonel Ford should be up on the Heights where the fighting was. He seemed to know little of what was taking place.

"Jim, let's go up and see what is taking place," said Bob.

"All right. Bob, that colonel is not worth shucks."

They had hardly started when there came a wild rush of men down the mountain, men wild with fear who had thrown away their guns.

"Cowards! Cowards!" cried the boys trying to stop them, but it would have been as easy to have stopped a stampede of wild Texas steers.

"See thar," cried Jim pointing to a tree. "Let's shoot them."

Behind the tree were cowering a captain and two lieutenants.

"It would do no good," said Bob. "Let's go on. They are still firing on the mountain."

There were still some brave men keeping up the fight, and as far as Bob could see there was no cause for the stampede of the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth. The enemy was not charging, and there was no great pressure on the line, it was not much more than a hot skirmish. "The cowards ran without cause," he cried; "Oh, shame! Shame!"

"Bob," asked Jim, "it's General Jackson attacking this place, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"No use going any farther then," said Jim. "What made them men run without cause? Didn't I tell yo' God was with Jackson?"

"Oh pshaw! Jim, let's go on," replied Bob.

"Don't want to; it's no use."

"Then I will go alone."

"No, yo' don't. I'll go with yo'; but, Bob, we will be fighting against God."

The boys picked up two muskets which had been thrown away and made their way to the front line. They found the men standing well, but since the stampede of the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth the number left was small. There was no pressure on the line, simply firing back and forth.

Suddenly there ran down the line the order to retreat. The men stared at each other. What had they to retreat for? Officers were asking each other

the same question. Where did the order come from? None could tell, but that was the order, and the troops prepared to leave.

Bob was dumbfounded. What did it mean? Going down the hill they came to the battery. The men were wondering and cursing. The order was to spike the cannon and leave them. The two heavy cannon were thrown over the cliff, and four field pieces were spiked and left.

Bob groaned. "This is a case of men fleeing where no man pursues," he said.

"Didn't I tell yo' the Lord was with Jackson?" said Jim. "He is putting fear in the hearts of the men."

"Rather, there are traitors at work," exclaimed Bob bitterly.

The boys went back and reported to Colonel Cameron.

"Just as I thought," he said. "There is something wrong. I will see Colonel D'Utassy."

The two colonels sought Colonel Miles. "Colonel, there was no cause for the surrender of the Heights. Let me take my brigade and recapture it," said Colonel D'Utassy.

Colonel Miles refused. He said that he could not spare the men.

"A regiment then. I can take it with my old regiment," cried D'Utassy.

Again Colonel Miles refused.

Night came and there was wild excitement throughout the camp. The men had lost all confidence all faith and all hope in their high officers.

"Miles is a d— traitor," cried a major.

"I heard he said the South was right, and he hoped she would win," said a captain. "We ought to hang him."

The sentiment was applauded among the soldiers.

"I have brought my regiment here to be trapped," said Colonel Cameron to Colonel D'Utassy.

"It looks like it," replied D'Utassy. "We will see what happens tomorrow. If worst comes to worst I shall be in favor of trying to cut our way out."

"Will White and Ford be with you?" asked Cameron.

"I don't know, but I will broach the subject."

Bob was in a quandary. "It will never do to be caught here, Jim," he said. "I believe we had better try to get out."

"Do you think we can?" asked Jim gloomily.

"Yes, now, but I would like to wait a day longer. Colonel D'Utassy thinks they will try to cut their way out tomorrow if it comes to that."

"No use," said Jim. "Jackson has them. But do what yo' think best, Bob. I'm with yo'."

When morning came it was seen that the battery left on the Heights had not been disturbed, nor was there a Confederate in sight around the guns.

Colonel D'Utassy renewed his request to be allowed to take his brigade, and recapture the Heights.

"With the Heights in our possession," he said, "it would be impossible for the Confederates to occupy and hold Harper's Ferry. Why not move the whole army up there? It would be easy to hold it against the whole Confederate army."

"There is no water up there," said Miles.

"The soldiers could carry enough to last them two

or three days and McClellan could relieve us in that time."

"We have about expended our ammunition for the heavy guns," replied Miles. "Anyway the battery has been spiked and is of no use."

Just then an officer rode up. "Colonel, heavy cannonading has been heard in the direction of Crampton's Gap. McClellan must be trying to force the gap."

"In that case McClellan is only six or seven miles away," cried D'Utassy. "We could easily hold the Heights until he came to our aid."

"I tell you," angrily replied Miles, "I have orders from General Halleck to hold Harper's Ferry to the last and I am going to obey orders. Evacuating the place and occupying Maryland Heights would be disobeying orders. Then, as I have said, the move is impossible on account of water and ammunition."

"Then let me take a company and go over and see if I cannot bring away the cannon that was left," said D'Utassy.

"Yes, you can do that," said Miles.

So D'Utassy sent over and brought away the four cannon that had been abandoned and also several loads of ammunition. Not an enemy did the men see or hear.

Now many of the officers clamored that they be allowed to cut their way out. This was argued with a great deal of vehemence, but Colonel Miles refused. Neither was it advocated by either General White or Colonel Ford.

Colonel Davis, in command of the cavalry, said, "Colonel Miles, the cavalry is now of no use here.

For the enemy to take our horses and equipment would be a serious loss. May I be allowed to take the cavalry out."

After some hesitation Colonel Miles gave his consent saying he would not be responsible for any failure.

While this was going on the thunder of McClellan's guns only six miles away could be constantly heard.

"Now, Jim, is our time," said Bob. "It's now or never."

"Yes, boys, go," said Colonel Cameron. "Your lives would not be worth a straw if you should be captured."

When darkness came Colonel Davis at the head of the cavalry rode away. Would they be able to get through?

Morning came and what a sight met their gaze! The enemy during the night had planted batteries that overlooked the works on Boliver Heights and they opened a furious fire.

Colonel Miles riding along the works believed it would be madness to try to hold them, and taking a handkerchief from his pocket, with his own hands gave the signal to surrender.

Having given the signal Colonel Miles turned to ride back to his headquarters, but for some reason the Confederates maintained a fire from their cannon for some twenty minutes after the white flag had been displayed. A shell exploded behind Colonel Miles, and a piece struck him inflicting a mortal wound.

When the surrender became known a groan went up from the Union ranks. Many of the officers in their rage broke their swords over their knees. It

was almost a bloodless victory, and the Confederates had taken 12,000 prisoners.[1]

When Colonel Davis passed into the darkness at Harper's Ferry he traveled a perilous route. The road led through the woods and up precipitous heights. His force rode at full gallop wherever it was possible. Once it ran into a part of Longstreet's wagon train which was captured and burned. Morning found them safe near Sharpsburg.

[1] No more shameful episode happened during the war than the surrender of Harper's Ferry. The fighting was almost nothing, the Federals losing only about 200 out of an army of 12,000. Jackson's loss was smaller yet. The number of prisoners captured was 12,580, the greatest number taken by either army up to that time, except by Grant at Fort Donalson. Seventy-two cannon and a large number of stores were among the trophies.

Many believe that Colonel Miles was a traitor and worked from the beginning to deliver the place into the hands of the enemy. There are many things that go to show that this might be the case. Still it is hard to believe that he was a second Benedict Arnold. Let us be more charitable and take the testimony of Colonel Cameron, who says that in all his intercourse with Colonel Miles he was vacillating, bewildered in fact, acting as if his mind was half paralyzed. His paroling and sending through the lines Confederate prisoners only the day before the surrender was either the act of a traitor or half-crazed man.

Colonel Miles was not the only one to blame. If it had not been for the slowness of McClellan's movements Harper's Ferry could easily have been relieved. As it was, McClellan knew of the situation at Harper's Ferry on Sunday. He was told it could hold out for two days. If Colonel Miles had held out one day longer he would have been safe, for it would have been impossible for Jackson to have lingered a single day longer at the Ferry and be with Lee at the battle of Antietam, which would have meant the destruction of Lee's army. As it was, Jackson lost thousands of men by straggling. Longstreet says Harper's Ferry cost Lee Antietam.

"Well, Jim, General Jackson didn't get us anyway," said Bob as he threw himself from his horse tired out.

"No, but he will have Harper's Ferry," replied Jim.

"I expect those officers we fooled will look for us among our men after the surrender, but they won't find us," laughed Bob.

Bob was right. The prisoners were gone over thoroughly in an effort to find the boys. It was known who they were, and the fact that Robert Hunter had once more eluded him was not pleasing to General Jackson.

CHAPTER XI

ANTIETAM

IT WAS expected that after the victory at Manassas Junction, Lee would attack Washington, but he had no such idea. He knew too well the great number of men that the Federals could throw into Washington.

Hardly had the thunder of the Confederate guns died away at Chantilly, before Lee's army was marching north to invade Maryland. No grass grew under the feet of Lee's army.

It is said that the soldiers of Napoleon's army in Italy boasted that their general won his victories with their feet — that is, by his rapid movements — instead of fighting. It is certain that the soldiers of Lee and Jackson gained their great victory at Manassas by their rapid marching.

When McClellan became certain that Lee was moving north he prepared to follow. Now came in the work of that old meddler, Halleck, again. The smoke of the conflict at Manassas Junction had hardly blown away when he ordered General White to evacuate Winchester and return to Harper's Ferry. This was done, and thousands of dollars' worth of property destroyed that could not be removed. At that time Winchester was in no danger, and if it had to be evacuated it could have been done leisurely and everything saved.

At Harper's Ferry there was an army of over 12,000 men under Colonel Miles. McClellan saw that Lee's northward movement would cut off that place so he wanted the Ferry evacuated and the 12,000 men to join his army. Again Halleck interposed, and ordered Colonel Miles to hold Harper's Ferry to the last.

We have seen how Colonel Miles took the order literally and Harper's Ferry with its garrison of 12,000 was lost.

Great as was the necessity for rapid movement, McClellan could not get over his habit of slowness and extreme caution. Under the plea of giving the army as much rest as possible, it took him seven days to move a little over forty miles. During this time Lee's army was marching five miles to McClellan's one.

Lee knew the value of time, and in less than a week was in the northern part of Maryland. Rumor gave him an army of 200,000. McClellan said he had at least 120,000, if not 150,000. Washington and the entire North was excited. Pennsylvania was in a furor. Governor Curtin was frantic. He saw this immense army invading the state, capturing Harrisburg, and then marching on Philadelphia.

Lee had no intention of invading Pennsylvania at this time. If he could defeat and crush McClellan's army he would turn back, capture Baltimore and then Washington, and thus end the war. His object now was to release northern Virginia from the grasp of the Federals and gather recruits and supplies in Maryland. He thought that Maryland would receive him with open arms and that recruits would

flock to his standard by the thousands. In this he was disappointed, as was John Morgan when he invaded Indiana and Ohio.

Knowing McClellan's extreme slowness, General Lee called in General Longstreet and proposed that he should take his corps, recross the Potomac into Virginia and capture Harper's Ferry. Longstreet violently opposed the movement, saying such a division of the army was extremely dangerous with McClellan so near, and that such an attempt would undoubtedly prove disastrous.

"It would be if the Federal army had a different commander," replied Lee, "but you know how slow and cautious McClellan is." Still, seeing Longstreet was so opposed to the movement, Lee said no more to him, but proposed it to Jackson who embraced it with alacrity, and won.

When the advance of McClellan's army entered Frederick, there was picked up on the street an order that became known as "the lost order." How it was lost was never known, but it was an order from General Lee disclosing the entire campaign. It told how General Jackson's corps had been detached to capture Harper's Ferry, and where his troops would be at such a time. This order was at once placed in the hands of General McClellan. Never before did a commander have such an opportunity. It was as if McClellan was in the secret council of General Lee.

McClellan acted on the order but too slowly. Between the two armies lay the South Mountains. McClellan ordered his army forward to seize Crampton and Turner's passes through these mountains.

He was a few hours too late, as he found the Confederates already in possession of these passes.

At both places severe battles were fought on the fourteenth, and in both the Federals were victorious and the passes gained, but the time lost in winning the passes caused the loss of Harper's Ferry.

As has been shown, Crampton Pass was only six miles from Harper's Ferry. It was carried by Franklin's corps, and the sound of the cannonading at Harper's Ferry was distinctly heard by that corps. During the forenoon of the fifteenth, the sound of the cannonading ceased, and they knew the Ferry had surrendered. There was no longer hope of relief.

While Lee's whole army was up in northern Maryland, Halleck sat in his office at Washington trembling for the safety of that city. Thousands of soldiers were kept near the city who should have been with McClellan. Even as late as September 13, the day Harper's Ferry was invested, Halleck telegraphed to McClellan:

> The capture of this place (Washington) would throw us back six months, if it would not destroy us.

At this time there were nearly 100,000 men around Washington, more than there were with McClellan.

Knowing that Harper's Ferry had been captured, Lee drew his army back behind Antietam Creek where Jackson could join him. There he awaited the attack of the Federal army.

On the evening of the sixteenth the two armies lay confronting each other. The sun that rose on the

seventeenth was to look upon the bloodiest day in the history of America.

Now to return to the two boys. When Colonel Davis took his daring ride through the darkness of the night in his flight from Harper's Ferry, he passed directly in the rear of the Confederate army, and morning did not find him entirely out of danger, as Stuart's cavalry was scouring the country.

After resting, Davis concluded to push on to Greencastle at the edge of Pennsylvania, the nearest post that he was sure was held by the Federals, and where he could get in telegraphic communication with the rest of the world.

When the boys learned this, they decided to leave the cavalry and find their way to the Federal army. Colonel Davis tried to persuade them not to try it, saying they would be captured as Lee was between them and McClellan's army, and that was the reason he was going to Greencastle instead of joining McClellan as he would like.

"It is different with us," said Bob. "There are only two of us, and we have credentials as Confederates and are dressed as such. You know the whole country is full of stragglers. I believe we can get through; at least, we shall try it. If a battle is fought I wish to be with my brother."

"Well if you must go, may success go with you," said Colonel Davis shaking hands.

The boys watched the cavalry ride out of sight.

"Well, Jim, we are alone again," said Bob. "How do you like it?"

"Better than being cooped up in Harper's Ferry. What had we better do now?"

"The first thing we must do, Jim, is to get some rest and food, not only for our horses, but ourselves. That night ride was worse than tramping over the mountains."

"My, but I am sore," growled Jim.

The boys took a road that seemed but little used, and after traveling about two miles came to a house where, after a little persuading and offering to pay liberally, they found not only forage for their horses but food for themselves.

As it was now late in the afternoon they concluded not to start until the next morning, so taking some supplies for themselves and their horses they went into the woods and camped for the night. It was well they did so, for scarcely had they left the house before a squad of Stuart's cavalry came. Bob had bribed the woman not to say anything about them and she kept her mouth closed. "I think the poor boys are deserters," she told her husband, "and I don't blame them for trying to get away."

Early the next morning the boys started out. They were surprised at the number of Confederate stragglers they met. Many of them were sick of the army and their only wish was to get home without being picked up. Others were so sick and weary they cared little what became of them. Some of them told the boys nearly half of their regiments were straggling. Generally the boys experienced no annoyance with them, but once they met with serious trouble.

They saw a crowd of stragglers resting by the side of the road near a house. They thought nothing of it until they came up and saw they were in charge of two soldiers. Just then a lieutenant and sergeant

came out of the house. "See that these lazy whelps move on," said the lieutenant to the sergeant, then turning to the boys exclaimed, "And who are you fellows?"

"Couriers with dispatches for General Lee," replied Bob.

"Pretty story," said the lieutenant with a sneer. "What are you doing clear up here? Where are you from?"

"At present from Hagerstown, but recently from the Shenandoah Valley," replied Bob nettled at the tone of the lieutenant.

Bob glanced at Jim and noticed he had his hand in the bosom of his shirt. Jim smiled, and Bob carelessly put his hand in his bosom. He had resolved to fight if he had to, but he wished to avoid trouble if possible.

"Worse and worse," cried the lieutenant with an oath. "You are trying to desert. Come along with me."

"Look here, don't go too fast if you *are* a lieutenant," replied Bob. "Try to detain us at your peril. Better look after your own business. Here are our dispatches. Here is our detail as couriers. When we reached Winchester we found Harper's Ferry was still in possession of the Federals, and that Lee's advance had reached Hagerstown. We made straight for there intending to cross the Potomac at Beverly Ford, but just before we reached the ford we met a scouting party of Federals and had to flee for our lives. This delayed us two days. When we reached Hagerstown we found our forces had retired from that place and were concentrating near Sharpsburg.

We are on our way there now. I hope you are satisfied."

"I am not," growled the lieutenant. "You are too far east. You are not on the direct road from Hagerstown to Sharpsburg. Let me see your papers."

Bob showed him the official envelope enclosing the dispatches. The lieutenant made as if to tear the envelope open.

"Open that envelope at your peril," cried Bob. "They are for General Lee alone. Our orders are to defend those dispatches with our lives and we will do it." In a twinkling Bob flashed his revolver and leveled it at the lieutenant. The bluff worked.

"Well you boys have the pluck," said the lieutenant with a grim smile. "I reckon you are all right. Go ahead."

The sergeant had started off with the stragglers but had not gone far, for one had fallen in the road and lay as if dead. The sergeant stood swearing at him.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed the lieutenant as he came up.

"This man says he has gone as far as he can; that he can't get up."

The lieutenant was not in the best of humor after his encounter with Bob. "Give him the bayonet. I reckon that will put some life into him," he growled.

The sergeant pricked the man with his bayonet. He winced, but made no attempt to get up.

"Give it to him. Run it clear through him if he won't get up. He's just stubborn," roared the lieutenant.

The sergeant placed his bayonet at the man's side and began slowly to run it in. The man struggled, then slowly began to rise, using his gun as a support. His eyes were bloodshot and had a wild unearthly look, and there were flecks of foam on his lips. He came to an upright position steadying himself on his gun, then he suddenly raised it and before the sergeant could prevent him shot the lieutenant through the head. Then giving a maniacal laugh he crumpled up in the road, where he struggled for a moment and then lay still.

The boys left the sergeant and his men staring in horror at the tragedy before them.

"Served the brute right," said Jim. "That lieutenant got just what he deserved."

Bob said nothing. More than ever he felt the cruelties of war.

Fearing that they would run squarely into Lee's army, they turned east on the first road they came to and rode several miles before they again turned south. They met with no more trouble, and night was falling when they came onto the rear of the Federal army. During the latter part of their journey they had been guided by the sound of cannon, so they knew the position of the two armies.

At first the boys were taken for deserters, and found difficulty convincing the men that they were Union scouts. At last they succeeded, and were directed to Porter's corps.

The army lay in line of battle ready for the conflict of the morning. Porter's corps was in the rear as a reserve. Bob found his brother's headquarters under a tree; its branches his only tent.

"Bob, have you come at last!" exclaimed his brother. "I have been expecting you for a week. I thought the prospect of a battle would bring you. But I was beginning to fear some evil had befallen you. You don't know how glad I am to see you alive and well. Where are you from, and why the Confederate uniform?"

"The last question first," replied Bob. "I am just from Harper's Ferry and as glad to see you as you me."

"Harper's Ferry! Why that has been taken. We just heard of it today."

"I got out just before it was taken. I left with the cavalry night before last. It was a tight squeak to get away."

"Then some of you did get away! I had not heard of that. Tell me about it. The surrender of the Ferry was a terrible blow to us. We understood that the place was safe. How many of you got away?"

"Nearly two thousand. We rode the entire length of the rear of Lee's army, captured an ammunition train of Longstreet's and brought forty prisoners with us."

"That is the only good news I have heard from Harper's Ferry. How did the place come to be surrendered? I have been told that Maryland Heights was impregnable."

"Maryland Heights was given up, given up unnecessarily, and it looks to me almost traitorously. The surrender was shameful. I can't understand it. Colonel Miles acted strangely. Why the very day we left he paroled and sent through the lines more

than a dozen prisoners. Prisoners who knew all about the situation."

"What! While the fighting was going on?" cried the general.

"Yes. Many of the officers and men openly accused him of being a traitor. I won't say that. Perhaps he can explain."[1]

"If he can't, he ought to be hung," said the general bitterly. "But you have not told me how you came to be at Harper's Ferry, and in this uniform."

Bob laughed and said, "Why, Clayt, I have been having the time of my life. I turned Confederate courier and even have dispatches for General Lee. I hope I shall have the pleasure of delivering them tomorrow — to him as a prisoner. Here are the dispatches."

General Hunter gazed at Bob in astonishment, and then turned away without a word, his face convulsed as if in agony.

"Clayt, don't feel that way about it!" cried Bob. "It is not as bad as you think. I got these papers by force. I have been in more danger a score of times than I was when I got these."

His arms were around his brother, and he was begging for forgiveness. "I didn't think you would feel like that, Clayt," he said in a broken voice.

"But a spy! You a spy!" murmured the general.

"Wasn't there a price put on my head over a year ago for being a spy?" asked Bob.

"But the charge was false, Bob."

"That would have made no difference as far as

[1] At this time neither Bob nor his brother knew that Colonel Miles had been killed.

the penalty is concerned. Really, Clayt, I have not been in as much danger this time as I have been many times on my scouting trips."

"That uniform!" The general shuddered.

Bob laughed. "Forgive me, Clayt, but I can't help laughing when I think how disappointed three or four Confederate officers are going to be when they find I am not with the prisoners captured at Harper's Ferry."

"Tell me about it, Bob."

"Not now, Clayt. There will be a big battle tomorrow and you need rest."

"Yes, Bob, it will be a big battle, one of the greatest of the war; one on which the safety of Washington may depend; one that may decide whether this is a nation or not. God only knows what the outcome will be. Lee is said to have an army of 100,000. I know McClellan's army is not that large."

"I don't believe Lee's army is nearly that large," cried Bob. "McClellan, as you know, is always overestimating the strength of the enemy. Such reports only serve to discourage the soldiers. Since Lee entered Maryland he has lost thousands of men by straggling. Don't I know it? Have I not talked with many of them? Some told me that half of their regiments had fallen by the wayside."

"I only wish McClellan could be made to see that," said the general.

"I see you are in reserve," said Bob.

"Yes, but if the battle grows hot we will be in it all right. But now we must rest. Good night, Bob. If we both live I'll hear the rest of your story another time."

On that field that night two great armies slept as sweetly and soundly as if there was to be no tomorrow, and to many of them the last tomorrow to ever come.

It was hardly light when the fitful firing of the picket lines began to be heard. The preparations for the battle began. The air seemed charged with electricity. Soldiers were laughing and joking, but the drawn countenances and trembling limbs showed the nervous strain they were under. Aides and orderlies were carrying orders, their horses at full speed; officers were shouting hoarse commands; regiments, brigades, divisions were wheeling into line; batteries were taking position.

Soon the fitful firing became a steady roll of musketry, and the thunder of cannon began to shake the earth.

From where the brigade of General Hunter lay but little could be seen of the battle.

The thunder of the conflict grew louder, but no orders came to General Hunter. Bob chafed like a chained tiger. As last he cried, "Clayt, I can stand this no longer. I must see what is going on. Just hear the crash of the musketry and the thunder of the cannon; even the sound of the cheering reaches our ears. The smoke almost obscures the sun. I must go and see what is going on."

"Don't go," urged his brother. "If I am ordered in the conflict, as I soon will be, you may go as one of my orderlies, but don't leave me."

"I must go," cried Bob. "You will want to know the news, and I can bring it to you. I promise I will not rush into the battle."

"Well go if you must," replied his brother, "but don't be gone long."

Bob had secured a soldier's blouse and he put this on, half hiding his uniform.

The fight seemed to be raging the fiercest near the little church and the sunken road, so Bob started in that direction. Soon shells began to burst over and around him, and he could hear the singing of half-spent rifle balls. He halted where he could get a good view, and at the grand, terrible sight he forgot all danger. Batteries were dashing to the front at full speed, heeding not the living nor the dead. Bodies of troops were rushing to some threatened point.

A feeling came over Bob that he was nothing but a speck, a fly. He might be killed, trodden under foot, no one would care, no one would notice him any more than if he were an ant.

In their weaving back and forth, the lines looked like monstrous serpents, vomiting forth flames and smoke. The Confederates had sought refuge in a sunken road and a Federal battery raked the road with shot and shell. The effect was so terrible that Bob shut his eyes in horror. The dead and wounded lay in heaps.

Now the Confederates would lose ground, then they would rally and come with a rush, and it would be the Federals that would have to fall back.

Bob rode farther to the right where Hooker was fighting. He had gained considerable ground, but now the Confederates seemed determined not to yield another foot.

Hooker was carried back severely wounded, but his men fought on.

What pained Bob was the number of wounded coming back. They were coming by the hundreds, if not thousands.

In his excitement he had forgotten how the time was passing, now he suddenly realized that it was nearly noon and he must be getting back.

He found that his brother's brigade had not moved, and the suspense of waiting was beginning to tell on the officers and men. They were beginning to wonder if McClellan felt himself already whipped, and would call for no more men, keeping them to cover the retreat.

"I can't believe it," cried General Hunter. "Retreat, with nearly a third of the army unengaged? No, McClellan is keeping us as Napoleon kept the Old Guard, to hurl us in at the opportune moment, and complete the victory. Here comes my brother. He has been out at the front; he can tell us how it is."

The officers crowded around, eager to hear.

"It is not yet either defeat or victory," said Bob. "The fighting is terrible. General Mansfield has been killed. Generals Hooker, Hartsuff, Richardson, and Weber are wounded. Hooker has gained considerable ground, but now the fighting seems to be at a standstill; that is, neither side yielding ground. I speak of the center and right. I have not been at the left where Burnside is fighting."

"Then it looks like defeat," spoke up a general.

"Defeat, no!" cried Bob in a ringing voice. "Though but a boy, I know how it is. You are not fighting as many men as you think. I have just come through the rebel lines. Lee's men are fighting

like devils to save the army. The Potomac is at their backs. Their line once broken, all is lost. They will hold their line until a favorable opportunity comes to cross the river. I don't believe Lee thinks of crushing us. He will be satisfied, if he can save his army."

"The boy talks sense," cried the general. "I believe this division could charge through their line if ordered. See how eager the men are."

No orders came. The men became more and more restless.

"Clayt, I am going to the left now," said Bob. "I want to see what Burnside is doing."

"Don't be gone so long this time," replied his brother. "Bob, you are like a flea. You can't keep still, but I don't blame you. I would do the same if I were not chained here. I hope you will find us in the fray by the time you get back."

"I'll look you up, if you are," called Bob as he dashed away.

Now came the order for the division to move, and in the excitement Bob was forgotten.

Bob rode to where the fight for the bridge was raging. As he neared the line an orderly as young as himself came dashing up, his horse at full speed. Just as he reached Bob's side a shell burst almost in their faces. A piece tore away the left sleeve of Bob's blouse and another passed so close to his cheek that it burned. The young orderly threw up his hands, and plunged to the ground.

Bob sprang from his horse and hurried to his side. Blood was gushing from his breast. "Here," he gasped, drawing an envelope dripping with blood

from his blouse. "For Burnside," he murmured, and was gone. There was a smile on his face, his dispatch would go.

Bob gave a look at the young hero, choked down a sob, and was on his horse and away.

"Where is Burnside?" he cried to a group of officers watching the fight.

"There," said one pointing to the general who was sitting on his horse a short distance away looking through his glass.

Bob rode up, saluted and said, "A dispatch, General."

Burnside reached forth to take it, but when he saw the blood his hand convulsively shrank back; but he reached for it again saying, "You must be severely wounded, my boy."

"No, I am not hurt. The orderly who was bringing it was killed; lived long enough only to tell me to get this dispatch to you."

Burnside tore the dispatch open. It was an order to take the bridge at all hazards. Hastily he prepared to obey the order.

Already the young hero who died, smiling that his dispatch would go on, was forgotten. There was no monument for him, nothing but a clod to be crushed into the earth. A few moments after he fell the ponderous wheels of a cannon passed over his body crushing it out of all semblance to a human form.

Burnside marshalled his forces for a last grand effort. Bob waited to see the result. The cannon opened a furious fire, sweeping the Heights beyond the bridge. At the word the soldiers sprang forward. Shot and shell rained on the bridge, and the soldiers

"For Burnside," he murmured

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went down like grass before the scythe, but the living pressed on. Not only the bridge was carried, but the Heights beyond. Wild cheers of victory mingled with the din of battle.

"It's done! It's done!" cried Bob.

General Burnside hastily wrote a dispatch and looked around for an orderly or aide to carry it. None were in sight, but he noticed Bob.

"You here yet? Good!" he exclaimed. "Carry this to General McClellan."

His dispatch read, "I have the pleasure of informing you that not only the bridge, but the Heights beyond have been carried."

Bob was off like a flash. He reached McClellan and saluting handed him the dispatch.

McClellan glanced at it, and then said to the officers about him, "Great news, gentlemen. Burnside has not only carried the bridge, but the Heights beyond. That means the left flank of the enemy is turned."[1]

McClellan then noticed Bob and said, "You are not the orderly by whom I sent the dispatch to General Burnside."

"I am sorry to say, General, your orderly was killed," replied Bob. "I happened to be near when he fell, and dying he gave me the dispatch, and asked me to get it to Burnside."

"A hero's death," said the general. "You, my boy, deserve credit. Whose orderly are you?"

[1] So important was the position captured by Burnside that hardly had Bob left when Lee hurled a full division on the force which had captured the ridge, and hurled them back. But the bridge was held.

"General Hunter's," promptly replied Bob.

Other matters now attracted the general's attention, and the death of the orderly and Bob's deed were forgotten. They were among the thousands of brave deeds never recorded.

Bob's heart sank when he found the brigade gone. He feared it had gone into action without him. After a time he located it. It had only shifted its position and was still in reserve.

The noise of the battle died away early. It was as if two gladiators had fought until completely exhausted, and had to stop to take breath. The carnage on both sides had been terrible. The Federals had gained some ground, but the ranks of the enemy remained unbroken.

Night came and the soldiers sank down where they had fought. No one thought but that McClellan would renew the battle in the morning, and great was the surprise when he did not. His excuse was the exhaustion of the soldiers and that reinforcements were coming. Yet in his army were 30,000 men who had not been engaged at all, or only slightly so.

All day the armies lay like two wounded beasts growling at each other. They cared for the wounded, but the dead lay unnoticed.

Next morning McClellan prepared to renew the battle but he found no enemy in front. Lee had improved the time in getting across the river. All he had left was his dead. "One day too late" could again be written on the record of General McClellan.

Bitter was the disappointment over Lee's escape. For the first time in its history the Army of the

Potomac had achieved a victory, but its fruits remained ungathered.

McClellan sent one division across the Potomac to see what had become of Lee's army. The division fell into ambuscade and fell back with a loss of between three and four hundred. The division was withdrawn across the river, and the Maryland campaign was over.

In going over the battle field Bob noticed the body of a young Confederate whose face he thought looked familiar. He looked closer and a lump rose in his throat. It was the body of Tom Stratton, once a playmate and a school fellow, but of whom the war had made an enemy. It was young Stratton who had engineered the plot which caused Bob to be arrested as a spy.

As Bob looked on the lifeless clay all resentment died from his heart. He took what little trinkets he could find on the body to save for his parents, then saw that the body was decently interred. It was all he could do.

Tears came in his eyes as he told his brother of the incident. "Poor Tom! I can't help feeling sorry for him," he said.

But Jim had no regrets. "He is the whelp who held me while another fellow pounded me in the face," he said.

"You should forget that now, Jim," said Bob.

"A mountaineer never forgets," replied Jim. "He always repays a kindness but usually revenges a wrong."

The dead had been buried, the debris of the battle field had been cleared away, and both armies sat

down to rest, the Potomac flowing peacefully between.[1]

[1] The battle of Antietam led to a bitter controversy. McClellan was blamed for his slowness and especially for not resuming the battle the next day, and preventing Lee's escape. The battle itself was clearly a draw, but the results were largely on the side of the Federals.

McClellan had an army of over 80,000, but it is doubtful if even 60,000 took an active part in the battle.

The Confederates claim they had only 42,000 engaged. This must have astonished McClellan when he found it out, for he thought he was fighting an army of nearly 100,000. The straggling in the Confederate army had been enormous. Longstreet says it amounted to 80,000.

The Federal loss was 12,416. The loss to McClellan's army in the whole campaign was 15,208. If we add to this the 12,000 prisoners taken at Harper's Ferry the total loss of the Federals amounted to 27,208.

The entire loss of the Confederates during the campaign was a little over 14,000. Although Lee had been driven out of Maryland he had inflicted double the loss on the Federals that he had received. The stragglers were gathered up and were once more with him.

The result of the battle of Antietam greatly encouraged the North. If McClellan had been defeated, in all probability both Baltimore and Washington would have fallen.

CHAPTER XII

GENERAL CLAYTON'S GETHSEMANE

NOTHING occurred for two days after her meeting with Robert to cause Agnes any uneasiness, and she felt sure no one knew of his being in the neighborhood.

General Clayton was improving rapidly, and hoped in a few days to be able to return to the field.

Judge Cadwalader had been obliged to return home, but at the earnest solicitations of Agnes and Helen, had left Clarissa for a short visit. In the stress and excitement her presence was a real comfort. Her light-hearted prattle and seeming ignorance of the issues at stake were a relief. Only the romance of war, its pomp and glory, appealed to her. She loved the marching columns, the waving banners, and the beating of the drums. The story of Robert Hunter appealed to her, and she thought little of his being an enemy.

When it was learned that Winchester had been evacuated by the Federals, it was decided that as soon as the general was able to travel he would go there to see about his property.

"Why not take us" asked the women. "It is about time to go back for the winter, anyway. There is no danger of the Federals gaining possession of the place again, is there?"

"I wish I could say not," said General Clayton smiling, "but we will have to wait a time before we can say that. But we can all go if you wish. We can run again, if necessary."

"If I go, I believe I will stay," said Mrs. Clayton. "The Yankees have always used me very nicely, even if I am the wife of a Confederate general."

"They are vandals, nevertheless," cried Mr. Somers. "I hear they burned part of the city before they left. There are bright days ahead, however. The last news was inspiring. Lee is in Maryland, and they say the whole Yankee army is demoralized, crying for peace. I believe the war will be over in two months."

"I hope you are right, Somers," replied General Clayton, "but I look for some heavy fighting yet. The Yankees will not give up so easily; still we are bound to win in the end. They can't stand before our soldiers. Was not the victory at Manassas Junction glorious? That move of Jackson's! Napoleon never made a more brilliant one. The regret of my life is that I was not with him."

"Never mind, General. You will soon be back, and the finish will be glorious."

Just then a Mr. Nevins from Staunton rode up.

"What news?" cried the general.

"Nothing new from Lee, but it seems we are not even safe here in the valley," replied Mr. Nevins. "Major Hardcastle has just been brought into Staunton. He was severely wounded, and his dispatches had been taken from him by two boys dressed as Confederates, but no doubt spies."

"Have they been caught?" cried the general.

"Not yet, but the whole country is being scoured for them."

"Did the major give a description of the boys?" asked the general. A horrible suspicion was forming in his mind.

"Yes," said Mr. Nevins, proceeding to describe the boys.

Now it was Clarissa who exploded a bombshell.

"I know," she cried clapping her hands. "They were the same boys who held up father and me. Helen, it was that cousin of yours. Isn't he grand?"

"Clarissa, how dare you?" cried Helen.

The mischief had been done.

"What do you mean?" thundered the general. "What have you been keeping from me? Are there more traitors in my household?"

Helen saw he must be told, and she related the story of the stopping of Clarissa and her father by the two scouts, and that Clarissa imagined one of the boys was Robert. "You know Clarissa is very romantic," she said. "The story of Robert's rescue of me excited her fancy. We did not tell you for we believed it all her imagination and we did not wish to worry you. I do not believe one of those boys was Robert."

"The description fits him," said the general. "There is no use in trying to think differently. It was Robert. Great Heavens! Robert dressed in Confederate clothes! Robert a spy! We have all thought wrong. The boy has been a spy from the beginning, a viper in the home. My honor is at stake. I will never rest until I see him hung even if he is my sister's son. Curse his Yankee blood!"

"You are not sure it is Robert," said Mrs. Clayton gently.

"I am sure," he cried. "Robert is in the valley. He may have been here. Some of you may have seen him, have shielded him. Tell me the truth!"

Mrs. Clayton arose with dignity. "General Clayton," she said coldly, "you are beside yourself. You do not realize what you are saying. I know nothing of Robert Hunter."

"Neither do I," said Helen. "But if I did I would never betray him to be hung."

"Treason!" shouted the general.

They were interrupted now by a neighbor calling. He had heard of the shooting of Major Hardcastle, and had a story to tell. He had been up early a morning or so before looking for some stock that had strayed, and at a distance had seen a lady riding rapidly up the road. She was met by two boys and stopped, and she and one of the boys had had a long talk. The lady then turned and rode back and the boys disappeared in the woods. "I thought it strange at the time," he said, "but not enough so to say anything about it. The shooting of Major Hardcastle changes the situation, however, and General, I feel it my duty to tell you I am sure that lady came from here."

The general's rage was fanned to a fever heat. He turned on Helen with fury. "You have lied," he shouted. "You met that traitor. There is no knowing what you told him. You are no daughter of mine."

"You will be sorry for this when you get over your anger," said Helen her eyes flashing. "You have said

truly, I am no daughter of yours, and will not be until you take back the words you have just spoken." She walked from the room.

The company sat appalled at the turn affairs had taken. Mrs. Clayton sobbed hysterically. Then Agnes came to her rescue. She did not stop to consider that when the general got over his anger, explanations might be made and he and Helen reconciled. She only felt she must set things right regardless of the consequences to herself.

Trembling, her voice faltering, she said, "General Clayton, you have done Helen a wrong. Robert Hunter has been here, but it was I who saw him. No one else knew anything about it. He came for love of you. He knew you had been badly wounded, and wished to hear how you were getting on, and how Mrs. Clayton and Helen were. I begged him to go, told him he had done wrong in coming, but betray him, I could not." She swayed and would have fallen had not her mother caught her and helped her from the room.

General Clayton sat as in a daze, then said brokenly, "Tell Helen to come to me."

The girl entered haltingly. General Clayton held out his arms beseechingly saying, "Helen, forgive me, I was beside myself. Come to me."

With a sob Helen threw herself into her father's arms.

Mr. Somers was stunned by Agnes's confession. When alone with General Clayton, he said, "So it was my daughter that met your renegade nephew. Young as he is, I believe Agnes is in love with him."

"Don't be rash as I was, Somers. Robert beguiled

her with soft words. He made her think it was only to hear of me that he came, and then went straight from her and shot Major Hardcastle. That boy must be a devil."

"There is something wrong," said Mr. Somers. "Agnes has never espoused the cause of the South as might be expected of a daughter of mine. When she gets over this we will come to an understanding."

That night Mr. and Mrs. Somers had a long talk. "I was never so humiliated in my life," said Mr. Somers. "I believe Agnes is in love with Robert Hunter. She has had numbers of offers of marriage and refused them all. Major Kincaid is crazy over her. I did not favor him much at first, but this war has sobered him. He is a splendid officer. He told me himself that Agnes had refused him with scorn and asked that I use my influence with her. He said if he could not win her, he wished to get killed in battle. I believe that, foolish as it seems, Agnes really loves that boy. See how she always preferred his company to that of any of her suitors."

"You have not the sharp eyes of a mother or you would see differently," said Mrs. Somers. "Agnes thinks a great deal of Robert, but she is not in love with him. She loves his brother, Clayton."

"What, that cur!" cried Mr. Somers.

"Yes. You know he and Agnes had not met in a number of years until his visit here in the fall of 1859. I then saw how things were going. But the raid of John Brown on Harper's Ferry came, and Clayton happened to be here. You know what happened. I do not believe that Agnes has heard from him since, but he had made a deep impression on her.

She likes to be with Robert because he reminds her of Clayton."

"Agnes in love with a Yankee general, one invading our sacred state!" he cried. "I had rather see her dead than marry Clayton Hunter. But she shall marry, and that soon if I have my way. She shall marry Major Wythe Kincaid."

This event was soon forgotten in joy over Jackson's capture of Harper's Ferry; but joy soon changed to gloom when it was learned that Lee was forced to retreat from Maryland. The feeling grew more hopeful when it was learned that he was still holding the line along the Potomac, and that all of northern Virginia was in his possession.

As soon as the general was able to travel, both the Somers and Clayton families started for Winchester. What Agnes had done had become generally known, and was much criticized, and both Mr. Somers and General Clayton wished to lay the matter before the Confederate authorities.

They had been in Winchester a couple of days when General Jackson visited the city. The place had been made a depot for supplies, and Jackson came to look after things. General Clayton made haste to call on him.

"I am glad to see you, General," said Jackson. "I have missed you in the recent campaign, and hope you will soon be with us again. We need brave men like you."

"I have come to report now," said General Clayton. "It is the regret of my life that I was not with you at Manassas Junction, Harper's Ferry, and Antietam. Your flank movement at Manassas has never been

surpassed in history, and the affair at Harper's Ferry was fine."

For a moment Jackson did not answer, then said slowly, "Longstreet thinks that Harper's Ferry cost us Antietam, but I do not think so. Antietam has proven a barren victory for the Federals anyway. McClellan hasn't made a move since. But it is of other things I wish to speak."

As he said this his eyes seemed to go through General Clayton, and the general moved uneasily. He had come to talk about Robert, but he did not know how to begin. He was afraid Jackson might not understand, and think he was trying to apologize.

Jackson saved him the trouble by suddenly asking, "General, have you heard anything of that nephew of yours lately?"

General Clayton was startled, but recovering himself replied, "To speak of him is, next to reporting for duty, my main object in seeing you. Things have come to my attention the last few days which have distressed me sorely."

"What are they?" asked Jackson brusquely.

Without reserve General Clayton told Jackson all that had happened.

"You say Agnes Somers acknowledges she met him, and did not inform on him?"

"Yes."

"She will bear watching."

"I think her father will attend to that," replied General Clayton. "A more loyal gentleman does not live. He is highly incensed over her action. General, I wish to say more. You have been right all along and I wrong. It was hard for me to believe

that my nephew was a spy while living as one of my family. I thought he was unjustly accused, but now I think differently. I believe he was a spy from the first, and should be caught and made to suffer the penalty of his crimes."

So saying, General Clayton sank back in his chair. "Pity me, General," he went on. "Robert was like a son to me, and he saved my daughter. But my duty to my country is above all ties of affection. I shall do all I can to see that he is apprehended and punished."

General Clayton covered his face with his hands, his whole frame shaking with emotion.

Jackson waited until he had recovered his composure, and then said kindly, "I do pity you, but what you have said rejoices me. I have at times felt that the love you bore your nephew would interfere with your duty as a soldier, but now I know better. Give me your hand, General Clayton. You have had your Gethsemane but you have won a victory; I too have had mine. Have you heard nothing of Robert Hunter since he shot Major Hardcastle?"

"Nothing," replied General Clayton.

"Then I can tell you more," said Jackson, and he rapidly sketched the career of the boys and their final escape into the Federal lines.

A throb of joy passed through General Clayton at the news of Bob's escape, but it was quickly suppressed. "I am sorry," he said slowly. "I would rather have it all over."

"It remains for you and me to see that his punishment comes," replied Jackson. "General Clayton, report for duty next Monday. Send Miss Somers'

father to me. No doubt the girl did not realize what she was doing."

With a lighter heart General Clayton returned to spend the remaining few days of his leave with his family. He informed his wife and daughter of what Jackson had told him about Robert. "Now," he said, "I can only hope he will see the folly of what he is doing, and go north and stay."

"I don't believe he will do that," said Mrs. Clayton. "He seems wedded to the exciting and dangerous life he is leading."

"Then he must take the consequences," replied the general. "He knows how his actions distress us; he knows the disgrace that would come to us should he be caught, as he will be sooner or later. He does not seem to care how much he makes us suffer or to think of the dreadful duty which may be mine of being instrumental in catching him."

"I know it is only your duty," said Mrs. Clayton, "but it is dreadful."

"Father is in honor bound to do just what he says he will do," said Helen; "but if he has a duty to perform, I have one too."

"What is that?" asked the general.

"To do all I can to keep you from catching Robert."

The general only stared at her. He could scarcely credit her words.

"In saying this," she continued, "I yield nothing in my devotion to the South, but I do not believe the fate of the Confederacy rests on Robert. He is but an atom in this great contest."

Before the general could answer Agnes Somers was

announced. Her eyes were red with weeping and she looked greatly troubled.

"Why, Agnes, what is the matter?" they asked.

"Father says I may be arrested for seeing Bob. He says it was my duty to inform on him, and that I should have given his note to you, General, right away."

"Thank God you didn't," thought the general, but he said, "That is what you should have done, Agnes. Your meeting him and keeping silent was a serious offense. General Jackson has decided, however, that owing to your youth and inexperience, he will overlook it. Your father has promised that you will not offend again. So do not worry."

"They can send me to prison if they like," said Agnes. "I would die in jail before I would give Bob away. It's not about that I'm crying. Father and I have had a terrible quarrel. He wants me to marry Major Kincaid, and I won't. I just hate him."

"Surely your father would not force you to marry a man to whom you object!" said the general.

"Yes, he has an idea I might take a notion to marry a Yankee, and he says he would see me dead first. You know how set against Yankees father is."

General Clayton had to laugh. "What put that idea in his head?" he asked. "I don't believe you've seen a Yankee officer since the war began. You've been in Staunton all the time. Now I might worry about Helen. She's been here in Winchester, and the Yankee officers have been about her like flies. To my knowledge she has refused one general, three colonels, and captains and lieutenants without number."

"Now Father," said Helen blushing.

"It's true, puss, and you know it. But I'm not worrying," laughed the general.

"It is different with Helen," said Agnes. "She is engaged."

"Why don't you get engaged then?" asked the general. "Mercy knows you've had chances enough. Just say the word and I'll get you a general, if you don't want Kincaid."

Agnes laughed. "I don't want to get married," she replied. "But Helen I want to talk with you."

The girls left the room arm in arm, the general watching them with a smile. "Clara," he said, "it is strange that Agnes is not married. She is at least a year older than Helen. It is not because she has not had admirers for they have been legion. I never admired Major Kincaid, but he has changed since the war, and has made a splendid officer. He is simply crazy over her, and now that her father has taken up his cause it will be hard for Agnes."

CHAPTER XIII

BOB VISITS WINCHESTER

McCLELLAN made no move to follow the advantage he had obtained at Antietam. This again brought him under severe criticism. Lincoln was bitterly disappointed that the victory was so barren. The jealousy among the officers of the army had increased rather than diminished.

Neither had things been going well in West Virginia. Taking advantage of the withdrawal of troops in that state to reinforce the Army of the Potomac, the Confederates had attacked and driven back the Federals, gaining possession of nearly the whole state. A small column of cavalry had even made a short raid into Ohio.

General Stuart at the head of his cavalry had made a raid into Pennsylvania, proceeding north as far as Chambersburg, which he captured with all its military stores. He then rode east towards Gettysburg, but before reaching that place turned south into Maryland, and made the entire circuit around the Federal army, crossing the Potomac near the mouth of Monocacy, he was once more safe in Virginia.

During his entire raid Stuart only met small parties of Federals which he easily defeated, and he makes the astonishing statement that he did not have a man killed during the entire raid.

Lee was drawing vast amounts of supplies from northern Virginia for the use of his army. The harvests were over, and the crops had been very good.

All these things led to dissatisfaction. It seemed to the country that McClellan was doing nothing, while the Confederates were always active.

Now that the campaign was over, Bob had time to think of all that had happened to him during his trip. His interview with Agnes was ever on his mind. What if it should become known that she had met him? He shuddered at what might be the consequences, and decided to tell his brother of the meeting.

The general was shocked: "Bob! Why did you run such a risk? Being a scout is bad enough, but a spy! Spies are necessary in war, but they are always held in contempt. And seeking that interview with Agnes Somers! Bob, if harm comes to that girl through that interview I shall never forgive you."

"I have already condemned myself a thousand times for it, but I saw no harm in wishing to hear of uncle."

"You risk a good deal to hear of an uncle who has declared he would give you up to be hung if he could catch you."

"As an officer in the Confederate army he is in honor bound to do that. It is different with Agnes. She has taken no oath to violate. She is a southern girl and of course sympathizes with the South. She believes the South to be wrong, I know that, but she can not go against her people. Clayt, she is a grand girl and as handsome as she is good. I only wish you could see her now. I would love to have her for a sister."

The general fairly glared at Bob. "Stop it!" he cried, "and, young man, if you ever put that girl in jeopardy again, you'll have to settle with me. Now let me hear no more of Agnes Somers."

Bob thought his brother acted strangely, but he said no more.

The more Bob thought of what might befall Agnes the more uneasy he became. What might not Jackson with his strong sense of duty and justice do? He resolved to find out what had happened, and to do this he would have to once more enter the enemy's lines.

Another thing influenced Bob; it would be easy for Lee from his present position to invade Pennsylvania. Bob was in hopes he could get news of importance.

He told Jim of his plans and found him ready for any adventure — anything rather than the monotony of camp life.

"Where will we go?" he asked.

"To Winchester," answered Bob. "I am well acquainted with every road and path around that city. I believe we could get into it without trouble. I want to find out how many troops are there, and, if possible, what Lee is doing."

For this trip they dressed in their rough mountain clothes and carried carbines. The woods and mountains must shield them until they were near Winchester. The Confederate army lay between them and that city, so they concluded to go north through Maryland into Pennsylvania, make their way to Chambersburg and then south, crossing the Potomac somewhere near Falling Water.

On their way to Chambersburg they nearly fell

into Stuart's hands. Traveling along the highway thinking of no danger since they were in Pennsylvania, they suddenly ran into his advance guard. In a moment the boys were over the fence bordering the road, and crossing a field.

"Halt!" cried the Confederates, and opened fire. The balls spattered around them but they kept on, gaining the shelter of a wood in safety. Here, finding they were not pursued, they halted to regain their breath.

"What can all those fellers be doin' clear up heah?" asked Jim. "Is it a raid or has Lee invaded the state?"

"We'll watch and see if any infantry follows," said Bob. "If not, it's a raid."

No infantry came so they knew it to be a raid.

"Shucks!" growled Jim. "They will ride clear around the army before McClellan will make a move."

"Then you don't think much of McClellan?" laughed Bob.

"Nope. Jackson is worth a dozen of him."

Bob did not answer, but he thought Jim was about right.

When the boys entered Chambersburg they found that place still much excited over Stuart's raid. Not only had he destroyed a great amount of public property, but his men had helped themselves to whatever they wanted, and had carried away several of the prominent men as hostages.[1]

The people were loud in their denunciation of the government because it had failed to protect them.

[1] Stuart says he could not find a man in Chambersburg who would admit he was a city official or had ever been one.

The boys had little trouble in making their way south until they reached the Potomac where they were told that the country across the river was swarming with the enemy. There was no use in trying to cross at any of the fords.

Keeping concealed in the woods they carefully reconnoitered the bank of the river, and were fortunate in discovering a canoe concealed in the mouth of a small stream. With this canoe they decided to cross when it was dark, and did so in safety, concealing themselves in a thicket on the other side to wait for daylight. One slept while the other watched, so that both were able to get considerable rest.

As soon as it was light they ate a little of the rations they had brought with them, and were ready to move. Just as they were starting they heard the tramp of horses and soon a company of cavalry came into sight. Cowering in the thicket the boys watched. The company halted near them, and the officer carefully scanned the opposite bank of the river through his glass.

"No Yankees in sight," he said. "We may as well ride on."

The boys gave a sigh of relief when the company disappeared. "Lucky they came when they did," said Bob; "a minute later and they would have caught us on the road."

Making sure the way was clear they crossed the road in safety.

The dangers of their trip now commenced. They dared not travel on any road, for the country swarmed with Confederates who seemed to be engaged principally in gathering forage and provisions;

so their route now lay through forests, tangled thickets, and over rough mountains. They had to dodge many scouting parties. Twice when they were sure none of the enemy was near they stopped at houses for provisions representing themselves as Confederates.

At last they reached the vicinity of Winchester. Creeping through the brush they gained a hill which overlooked the city. They judged there was no great body of troops in the place, but great trains of wagons were parked around.

"Jim, if we can gain one of those trains," Bob said, "we can easily pass as teamsters, and ought to be able to get into Winchester. We will have to wait until dark. As far as I can see there are no guards or soldiers on the side of the train towards us. There probably are guards on the other side though, to prevent the teamsters from entering the city. You know as a rule these mule drivers are rather a tough lot."

"Ought to make the niggers drive the mules," replied Jim. "It's no job for a white man."

As soon as it was dark, the boys crept down the hill and when they were near the train sought a secure place to hide their carbines and luggage where it would be easy to pick them up on their return. The only weapons they took with them were their revolvers, hidden in their bosoms.

As they expected, they found no guards and were soon among the wagons and mules. Coolly and apparently unconcerned they walked through the train unnoticed. They found a string of guards posted between the train and the city.

"The only thing we can do," whispered Bob, "is to try to creep between two of the guards. It will be risky, for they are posted thickly. We will have to wait until the camp quiets down for they will then be more careless and I hope sleepy."

They sauntered back, being careful not to engage any of the teamsters in conversation, but answering if one spoke to them. It was nearly nine o'clock before the camp began to settle down to rest.

The boys passed a wagon where a teamster stood talking to another who was sitting doubled up on a box with his hands on his stomach groaning bitterly. As they came up they heard the one standing say: "It's too blamed bad, Jim. It's nine o'clock now. Them passes won't be worth a cent."

"What's de mattah, boys?" asked Bob.

"Why, Jim and me had passes to go to the city tonight, and Jim had to eat something that give him the colic. Cuss the luck. It's nine o'clock now and we'uns had to be back at 'leven."

"What yo' take fer them passes?" asked Bob.

"We'uns not allowed to sell them. Our names be on 'em."

"That don't make no difference. They don't look at the name," said Bob. "Me and my pard would like to go to town. Thar be a couple of gals we'uns would like to see. We'uns can just about make it and be back by 'leven. What you take?"

"Sell 'em, Dick," moaned the sufferer. "No use my thinkin' of goin' tonight."

"Five dollars," said Dick.

"Heah's your money," said Bob pulling out a bright new Confederate bill.

The fellow handed over the passes, and pointing to a guard said, "Don't try to pass that one, he knows we'uns."

The boys sought another part of the line, and had no trouble in passing, the guard saying, "Yo' will have to make tracks, boys and do your business quick fo' them passes be no good after eleven."

"We'uns will make tracks suah," replied Bob as he and Jim started off at a rapid pace.

"Now, whar be yo' goin'?" asked Jim as they entered the city.

"Where you will meet a nice lady who will never give us away," answered Bob.

"What, that Agnes again?" asked Jim.

"No, not a girl, a woman, I said."

They passed a pretentious house through whose windows shone no light. "There is where I used to live," said Bob. He spoke lightly, but in his heart was a great sadness.

Soon they passed a finer house than the first. It was brightly lighted. "There is where Agnes lives, Jim. I'd like to call on her but must forego the pleasure." Again he spoke lightly, but again he was filled with sorrow.

At last they turned into a side street and soon came to an alley. Bob halted and whispered to Jim, "Look sharp and see if you can see anyone."

"Not a soul," replied Jim.

"Then come." Bob slipped into the alley followed by Jim.

After going about half a block Bob opened a gate which led into a back yard, and gently rapped at a door. There was no response. He rapped a little

louder. Light footsteps were heard and a voice asked, "Who is there?"

"Robert Hunter. Put out any lights you have, Rachel, and let me in."

With an exclamation of surprise the door was cautiously opened.

"I have someone with me, Rachel," said Bob as he and Jim stepped into the kitchen and the door was closed. All was dark inside.

"If the curtains are down we can have a little light," said Bob.

Rachel lit a small lamp and the trim figure of a lady somewhat over thirty years of age was disclosed. Her dress was dark and plain, in fact looked very Quakerlike.

"It is indeed you, Robert," she gasped. "Why did you come? Think of the danger!"

"I shall be here but a few moments. I have a pass to get out of the city. Rest easy."

Rachel Keene was one of the few persons in Winchester who was known to possess Union sentiments, who went and came as she pleased, but her works of mercy among both Federal and Confederate wounded endeared her to all. Of Quaker descent, although not professing to be one, she had many of the characteristics of that sect.

"Are we alone?" asked Bob.

"Mother is in bed asleep. There is no one else in the house excepting ourselves," she replied looking at Jim.

"You can trust Jim, Rachel, but I would like to have a little private talk with you."

"Come into the next room," she replied. "Robert,

you did wrong to come, but now that you are here what is it you want?"

"First I want to know about Agnes Somers. What do you know about her?"

"She is here in Winchester. Robert, you came near getting her into serious trouble."

"Then they know," groaned Robert. "Rachel, is she — in — " His lips refused to speak the word.

"No. The matter has been hushed through General Clayton and Mr. Somers. You know Mr. Somers is very wealthy and has given a great deal of money to the Confederacy. As no damage was done, it was thought the lesson would be enough for Agnes. I understand that is the view Jackson took of it. He is a generous man."

"You have lifted a load from my mind. Someway, I don't know how, I became impressed with the idea that her visit with me was known and I imagined all sorts of things. I could not rest until I knew, so here I am. How was it found out?"

Rachel told him.

"Then it was the tongue of that foolish Clarissa Cadwalader that caused all the trouble, and Agnes, rather than have trouble between Helen and her father, confessed. Rachel, there's a girl a man could afford to die for."

"She is indeed a noble girl, but her troubles have only begun."

"What do you mean, Rachel? What has happened now?"

"Agnes, as you are aware, has refused many proposals of marriage and her father has become impressed with the idea that she is in love with some

Yankee, and swears that she shall marry a Confederate at once."

Bob was astonished. "Some Yankee! Who can it be?"

"I don't know, Robert, unless it is you," said Rachel laughing.

"Stop your fooling, Rachel. Is there any particular Confederate her father wants her to marry?"

"Yes, Major Kincaid."

Bob nearly jumped from his chair. "That whelp!"

"Not so loud, Robert," cautioned Rachel. "I do not wonder at your surprise. But the war seems to have changed him. He is a very efficient officer, and I understand is to be promoted soon. Since the battle of Antietam he has been engaged in gathering up stragglers here in northern Virginia, and has succeeded in picking up over six thousand."[1]

"That many? It does not seem possible. Oh, if McClellan had only followed up his advantage after Antietam! But Agnes will never consent to marry Kincaid. She despises him. She knows he was in that plot to convince people that I was a spy."

"Robert, everybody believes now that that charge was true. Even your uncle says you have deceived him from the beginning. Now that Kincaid has Mr. Somers' permission, he is pressing his suit harder than ever."

"The villain!" Bob's face was distorted with rage and his hands clinched.

[1] So a Confederate officer reported to Lee.

"Robert, thy passion will not help Agnes," said Rachel gently.

Bob thought rapidly. "Rachel can you get a note to her?"

"I would not dare give it to her myself, for she must never know I've seen you, but I think I can get one to her. But be careful, Robert, to say no word to implicate me."

"Thank you, Rachel. Be assured I'll not bring you into this."

Under the faint light Robert wrote a short note and sealing it handed it to Rachel saying, "Now if you can get it to her I will be very thankful."

"I'll see that she gets it," replied Rachel placing the note in her bosom.

"Rachel, a little more and I will go. I want some information. You certainly hear rebel talk. You know what is going on around Winchester. Have you heard or observed anything that would lead you to think that Lee intends to invade Pennsylvania, or is he making preparations to hold northern Virginia?"

"Robert, you should not ask me that. That would be giving information that would hang me if it became known. The people here trust me. They look upon me as a non-combatant."

Bob looked at Rachel a moment silently and then said, "Rachel, you and I had better understand each other. At the beginning of the war information was sent to Federal officials. I was accused, falsely, as you know, of sending it. Who sent it?"

For once Rachel's composure left her. "Robert Hunter, what do you mean?" she gasped.

"Nothing that need be said, Rachel. For the flag we love, you and I can risk much."

Rachel sat for a moment in study, then said, "You are right, I will give you the information you wish.

"From what I have seen and heard I do not think General Lee has any intentions of invading Pennsylvania at the present time. Neither do I think he intends to hold his present position if McClellan should move to cut his communication with Richmond. His present object seems to be to hold northern Virginia as long as he safely can, and gather all the supplies possible. This information I believe you will find reliable. Of the strength of the rebel army I can give you no figures, though it is much less I am sure than is generally supposed. That is all."

"Rachel, you have given me what I want. I would meet death before I would see you suffer, but there is no Clarissa Cadwalader here to give us away."

"Let me get you and your companion something to eat."

Quickly Rachel placed food before the boys. Jim, who had begun to be very uneasy over the length of time they were staying, made no objections when he saw the food.

Both boys ate their fill. "This will last me for a day," said Jim patting his stomach. "Jiminy! but it's good to eat a square meal."

"God bless you, Rachel," said Bob as he bade her good-bye.

"And may the Lord protect thee, Robert," she whispered.

All lights were extinguished and the door cau-

tiously opened. As the boys slipped out the clock struck eleven.

"Did you hear that, Jim," whispered Bob.

"Yes. It may mean we'll have to kill a guard or two."

"I hope it won't come to that, but we must get away."

When they reached the Somers' residence it was still brightly lighted and Bob turned down a dark street which ran by the side of the house.

As they did so, a door leading on a porch was opened and two men came out and down in the yard. By the light from the door Bob saw they were Mr. Somers and Major Kincaid. Bob's blood boiled, and instinctively he laid his hand on his revolver. He motioned Jim to hide in the shadow of the fence. The two men stood so close to the boys they could hear all that was said.

"It is no use trying to win her by mild means," said Major Kincaid. "She simply treats me with contempt."

"Be patient, Major," answered Mr. Somers. "Girls always make a big fuss, but they give in at last I hear you will get your commission as colonel in a few days. That ought to help."

"You misjudge Agnes. I don't believe it would make any difference to her if I had Lee's place. I tell you she is in love with that spy, Robert Hunter. I shall never rest until I catch him and have him hung."

"You are mistaken, Major. If she is in love it is with someone else. It may be — no, I will not speak of my suspicions. All I can say is I will do all I can

for you short of dragging my daughter to the altar. That I cannot do. Good night. It may come out all right yet."

"If there is anyone else let him take care," said the major. "The world isn't large enough for us both. Good night."

The major passed within a few feet of where Bob and Jim lay. As he passed, Bob drew a long breath.

"I know how yo' feel," whispered Jim. "I was afraid yo' would shoot. Bob, my hand is resting on a stone, that weighs full two pounds. Let me follow that feller and hit him on the head."

"No, Jim, it's too risky. Let the cur go this time."

"Well, I'll carry the stone anyway. It may come in handy."

"Now for it," whispered Bob as they approached the train. "We are nearly an hour late. I will try and bribe the guard. Don't shoot unless we must. If we do, break for the wagons and mules. Once among them and we have a good chance for escape."

"Halt!" commanded the guard. "Boys, yo' must hev been on a spree. Yo' be nearly an hour late. I'll hev to call the corporal."

"Don't be too hard on we'uns," whined Jim. "I sprained my ankle, or we'uns would hev been heah befo'."

"Tell that to the corporal," laughed the guard.

"Heah be ten dollars to let us pass," said Bob.

"What! Trying to bribe me," said the guard. "I believe this is a put-up job to get me into trouble. Cor—"

Jim sidled up to him, and brought the stone in his

hand down on the guard's head with tremendous force. He sank to the ground without a moan, and the boys lost no time in getting away. They were afraid to run but they walked as rapidly as possible without attracting attention. Getting among the wagons they sauntered along as if in no hurry.

On their way they passed the teamster, who had had the colic. He was sitting by a little fire but was not moaning.

"Feeling better?" asked Bob.

"Yes, reckon I'll try and get a little sleep. Had a good time? But say it's midnight, how did you get past the guard?"

"Crept through," replied Bob. "Here are your passes. Better keep them and say nothing about selling them. It will be no trouble for you to prove you were sick, and did not use the passes."

Before the teamster could reply the boys were gone. "Whew! They must hev got into some trouble," he thought. "I'd better tell Dick."

He went to the wagon where his partner was sleeping, and waking him whispered what Bob had said.

"Yo' crawl right in heah and lay still," was the reply. "Them fellers certainly hev been up to something. We'uns will swear them passes hev never left our hands."

In a short time a commotion was heard. The insensible guard had been found.

The next morning a thorough investigation was made, and it was found that all but two of the passes issued had been returned. It was easy to find those two, but the men swore one had been sick and they had not left the camp. They proved it by a number

of witnesses. On the other hand a guard swore the boys had passes with those names on them. He noticed it because it was late when they went, and he told them they would not have much time. It was a mystery the officers never solved.

Bob and Jim made their way without difficulty to where they had hidden their carbines and knapsacks and found them intact. Although they had a number of narrow escapes on the way back they met no mishaps and one day they appeared before the tent of General Hunter, saluted, and said, "We are ready to report, General."

CHAPTER XIV

AGNES SOMERS

THE night Bob was in Winchester was an eventful one for Agnes Somers. Major Kincaid, encouraged by her parents' full consent, had pressed his suit with so much ardor that at last Agnes said, "Major Kincaid, if you are a gentleman you will not force your attentions on me, even though my parents are willing. I have told you time and time again that I can never marry you. I am sorry to go against the wishes of my parents, but this is final."

"Agnes, you cannot mean it," cried the major. "Surely you will not go against your parents' wishes. They know much better than you what is best for you. They only wish for your happiness. Agnes, I adore you, and will do anything to make you happy. I cannot give you up now. You are my life, my all." He took her in his arms.

"You forget yourself," cried Agnes. "Free me, or I will call my father."

With a smothered curse Kincaid released her.

"Major Kincaid, you have acted as no gentleman would," cried Agnes with scorn, sweeping from the room.

"Father," she said as she went by him, "Major Kincaid is in the parlor alone."

Mr. Somers saw she was excited and went to the

parlor at once. He found a thoroughly enraged man pacing back and forth. "Mr. Somers," he cried, "it's no use. She treats me with contempt. Says she does not care what you say — she will marry whom she wishes."

"I will have a settlement with that young lady in the morning," said Mr. Somers grimly. "Did you do anything to excite her?"

"I — I tried to embrace her," stammered the major.

"That's it. You are too ardent. You make love as you fight. That will not do with all girls, they are coy."

The two men went out and finished their talk in the yard where the boys overheard them.

Agnes spent a miserable night. It was nearly morning before she sobbed herself to sleep. She arose hollow-eyed and languid. How far would her father go? She trembled to meet him.

Mr. Somers also was uneasy. He did not care to pose as a tyrant, but the things Mrs. Somers had said made him uneasy. He was not convinced she was right and that Agnes was not in love with Bob. Such things had happened; even if Bob was a boy, he would not be a boy long.

He greeted Agnes kindly at the breakfast table and asked her to come to the library after the meal. She went with faltering steps.

"What is it, Father?" she asked humbly.

"Sit down daughter. Don't be afraid of me. I want to talk with you. I do not want to be harsh, but I want the truth. Why are you so rude to Major Kincaid? He says you treated him with contempt.

You are well aware that he has my consent to pay you his addresses."

"Father, his attentions are odious to me. I tried to treat him civilly until he so far forgot himself as to take me in his arms. If you must choose me a lover, why not choose a gentleman? Do you wish a daughter that will allow such liberties before she is engaged?"

Mr. Somers winced. "Major Kincaid in his ardor went too far. You ask me to choose a more agreeable lover; why not choose one yourself from your admirers? Who shall it be?"

Agnes hung her head and then named half a dozen who would be more agreeable than the major, but ended by saying, "Father, I don't want any of them for a husband."

"That is just what I want to get at. No girl of your age with as many lovers as you have, would flout them all without some cause. I wish to get at that cause. Is there someone else? The truth, girl," he said harshly.

Agnes did not answer.

"Your mother thinks it is Clayton Hunter—that you have been in love with him all the time. Is that the truth?"

Agnes gave a gasp of surprise, then grew pale and said, "Clayton Hunter! Why father, I have not seen or heard from him for three years."

"That makes no difference. I know he used to show you a great deal of attention, and if I am any judge you reciprocated his feelings. At that time I had no objections for I knew he was of fine family and rich, and I thought a gentleman. He proved himself an abolition dog, and he insulted me."

"Father, you were excited that day. You hardly knew what you said. He only protected his own good name."

"You take his part, do you? I believe your mother is right. Is she?"

"Father, do you think I would confess to loving a man who never spoke a word of love to me, one whom I have not seen or heard from in years? I would never confess to such a love. Father, if you are afraid I'll marry a Yankee I'll make a bargain with you. If you will promise not to try to make me marry a man I don't want, especially Major Kincaid, I will promise never to marry without your consent." She broke down and began to cry.

"There, there, girlie," said her father kindly. "Don't take on so. You will give me your solemn promise not to marry without my consent?"

"Yes, Father."

"That ends it. I'll tell Major Kincaid there's no hope for him. I hope you will see some good man soon, some brave soldier whom you can love. Agnes, my great desire is to see you happy." He took her in his arms and kissed her. She threw her arms around his neck and sobbed, "Oh, Father, I do love you, and I'll never marry without your consent, and I will try and love some man soon."

"I think we understand each other now, Agnes, so wipe your eyes."

True to his word Mr. Somers saw Major Kincaid and told him there was no hope.

A look of baffled fury came into the major's face but he quickly suppressed his rage and said, "I can only bow to your decision, Mr. Somers, but I shall

never give up hope. I believe that the love I have for Agnes will yet bear fruit. When she realizes how deep that love is she will love me in return."

"If that is the case I will make no objections, but my advice is to give her up. I believe your case is hopeless."

Major Kincaid did not answer, but in his heart was the thought, "I'll have her, if I have to take her by force."

That afternoon a division of Confederate troops marched through the city, and Agnes went out to see them, thinking it would help her to forget herself.

From all the houses along the road flags were waving and people cheering. Proudly did the tattered soldiers march. Above them waved their battle-torn flags.

At last the call of the bugle, the beat of the drum, and the shrill notes of the fife died away, and with a sigh Agnes turned to go. She felt a touch on her shoulder, and turning saw Rachel Keene standing behind her.

"The pomp and glory of battle!" said Rachel; "but, oh, to what are they marching! You seem to feel it too. You look very unhappy."

"I am unhappy," said Agnes, "not only over the war, but other things. I might as well tell you, Rachel, for I suppose you already know it. I got into disgrace over an interview I had with Robert, and then father and I quarreled over my marrying Major Kincaid."

"I know," said Rachel. "It was thoughtless in Robert, but brave in you to confess for Helen's sake. Agnes, I am proud of you."

"My quarrel with father troubles me more than my interview with Robert. I have been forgiven for that on my agreement that I will never do it again. Father and I have also made up, but only after I gave him a promise that may cause me much trouble. I don't see how he can want me to marry Major Kincaid. We all know what he was before the war, and he was in that plot to ruin Robert. If it had not been for that plot Robert would never have been a—a—I can't say it, Rachel."

"Let us walk a little," said Rachel with a curious expression on her face. "I am glad your father has given up the idea of Major Kincaid; he is no fit mate for you. But now you should be happy. If your promise should ever cause you any trouble come to me and I will try to help you."

"I will remember," said Agnes, throwing her arms around Rachel and kissing her.

Their walk had led them to a quiet street running in the rear of Mr. Somers' residence. It was growing dark and no one was in sight except a young negro who seemed to be loitering on the corner near them.

"I must leave you now," said Rachel. "I will watch and see you get safely home."

"You are so good. Good night!" said Agnes tripping away with a lighter heart.

The negro started and walked toward her. His battered hat shaded his face, and as he neared her he looked the other way. As was customary, he stepped from the sidewalk as she passed, but extended his hand saying, "A letter fo' yo', lady, yo' alone."

Before Agnes was hardly aware of it a note had been thrust into her hand. So slight had been the

halt one would not have noticed it, but Rachel did, and smiling turned away.

Agnes clutched the note, her heart beating rapidly. What did it mean? more trouble? more mystery? She had not caught the slightest glimpse of the negro's face. With trembling hands she thrust the note in her bosom.

When she reached home she found her father was giving a banquet to a number of officers, and that Mrs. Clayton and Helen were there to help entertain.

"Where have you been, child?" asked her mother. "We were beginning to be worried."

"I took a walk with Rachel Keene after the soldiers had passed, and it grew dark before we noticed it. She was telling me about her work."

"No harm could come to you if you were with Rachel," replied her mother. "Hurry and get ready for dinner."

The letter must wait.

It was a gay company, and never did Agnes seem happier, never did her laugh sound merrier, never did she look more beautiful.

Major Kincaid was one of the guests, but he looked dark and forbidding and had little to say. More than once was he rallied on his silence. He scarcely took his eyes from Agnes, cursed softly under his breath, and swore he'd have her yet.

Many were the compliments paid Agnes and Helen, and when the ladies left the table a grizzled old general said, "Have the young men of Virginia ceased to care for beauty? I understand Major Crampton has not, and that he has won the hand of Miss Clayton, but how is it that Miss Somers, one

of the most beautiful roses in Virginia, remains to be plucked?"

"Faith!" said a merry young captain named Lathrop, "it is not our fault. Many of us have tried to pluck that rose, but it has always been a little out of our reach. Ask Kincaid there."

Kincaid sprang to his feet, his face distorted with passion. He glared at Lathrop for a moment as if he would spring at him, then seeming to think better of it, gave a mirthless laugh and sank into his seat saying, "Excuse me, gentlemen; at first I thought Captain Lathrop meant to insult me, but I now see I was mistaken."

"You certainly were," said the captain. "No insult was intended. It was all in raillery."

"So I see. You were only trying to prove by me your own discomfiture in failing to pluck that rose. As for me I generally get any flower I reach for."

There was a roar of laughter at Captain Lathrop's expense, and before it subsided an orderly entered the room. Saluting, he said, "Pardon me, gentlemen, but I have an order for Major Kincaid marked, 'Important, deliver immediately.'"

Kincaid opened the envelope and first his face lighted, then clouded. "Gentlemen, I suppose I am to be congratulated," he said. "I hold in my hand a commission as colonel."

"Hurrah!" they shouted, "a toast to Colonel Kincaid."

When the uproar had ceased, Kincaid continued: "that is not all. I am ordered to report to General Loring in West Virginia. I start in the morning, I shall have to leave you at once to get ready."

"Too bad," they said. "We shall hate to lose you, Colonel."

"A soldier obeys orders," replied Kincaid, and added, with a wicked smile, "I will say to the young gentlemen present that the field is open for them to pluck that flower, but they should remember that an absent lover is more dangerous many times than one present."

"He is a lucky dog," whispered a major to Lathrop. "Just made a colonel, and rumor says Mr. Somers favors his suit for the hand of his daughter."

"The only drawback to that," laughed Captain Lathrop, "is that rumor also says the daughter objects."

The dinner was over at last and Mrs. Clayton and Helen gone, Agnes was at last free to seek her room and read her note. The night was quite cool, and there was a fire burning in the grate.

"You need not stay, Tilly," she said to her maid. "I will sit by the fire a while before I retire."

"Tank yo', Miss," replied Tilly. "May yo' sleep well, and wake wid bright eyes."

No sooner was the maid gone than Agnes locked the door and tore open the note. At the first glance she gave a short cry, "Bob in Winchester!" The note ran:

DEAR AGNES:

You will be surprised to know I am here in Winchester; but do not worry, I shall be away in an hour. How I want to see you — but that is impossible. I had to come because in some way I became obsessed with the idea that my visit to you at Staunton had become known, and I was filled with horror at what might

happen if the full penalty of secretly meeting a spy was exacted. I knew what it would be, and I came fully determined if that were the case to give myself up to save you. Happily that was not necessary. I see that my fears overcame my judgment. The Confederate government would not think of exacting such a penalty for your slight indiscretion. You gave me no information; I asked for none.

I know now all that has happened, and the news that you have not suffered well repays me for my visit.

Agnes, your confession to save Helen was the finest act I ever knew. You are the grandest, noblest girl in the Confederacy.

I am also told that your father wishes you to marry Major Kincaid! What! mate you with that villain! Before such a thing should occur I should feel like killing him; but I know you will never marry him.

Agnes, when I returned and told Clayt of my interview with you he glared at me like a tiger. "Bob, if harm comes to that girl through you," he cried, "I will never forgive you!" He was terribly wrought up. I know what good friends you used to be when he came to visit me, but of late years I had not heard him speak of you, but the thought that you might be in danger seemed to worry him greatly. How I wish he could see you. You know I have always wanted you for a sister.

Forgive me for causing you so much trouble. It seems as if I were born to make trouble. I can hardly think of Uncle and Aunt and Helen without crying. But I have already written too much. My time is up and I must go. How I wish you could give my love to the folks, but I know you cannot. Burn this as soon as you read it. Good-bye. Bob.

Agnes read the letter through again and again. What Bob had written about his brother seemed to

distress her. "It can't be true! It can't be!" she thought. "And if it is, I have promised father never to marry without his consent." She wept long and bitterly.

How long she sat she did not know, but when she aroused herself the fire was burning low. She stirred it up and laid the letter on it. It flared up in a bright blaze then died to black ashes.

"Like all my hopes," she murmured.

CHAPTER XV

MC CLELLAN REMOVED

"BACK again," cried Bob as he and Jim entered General Hunter's tent.

The general had given up all hopes of controlling Bob's comings and goings, and concluded the only thing to do was to let him have his own way. After all, he probably was not in much more danger than if he was a soldier. So instead of upbraiding him for not letting him know he was going on a trip, he greeted him warmly and asked where he had been.

"To Winchester."

"Winchester! Why, Bob, that is right in the midst of the rebel army."

"I know it, but Jim and I got through all right and you see we are back. What is more we have important information."

Bob told all he had learned from Rachel Keene.

"This is important," exclaimed the general. "We must see McClellan at once. How did you learn all this? Who gave you the information?"

"It is not well for me to tell even you. It's a secret best kept."

"I see you are learning prudence, for which I am glad. I have many questions to ask you but will wait until we have seen General McClellan."

General Hunter sent in word he had important

information, and was at once admitted to the general's headquarters. McClellan looked inquiringly from the general to the boys.

"These boys are just from Winchester," said General Hunter. "One of them is my brother. You can depend absolutely on what they say."

"From Winchester? How came they there and how did they get away?" asked McClellan.

"My brother can answer."

Bob saluted McClellan, saying, "We reached Winchester by hiding in the woods and mountains and going dressed as you see us now. We came back the same way. We are scouts."

"Scouts! For whom are you scouting? I do not remember ever having employed you."

"You never did, General. I have a general order from President Lincoln as a scout. Jim Kidder is my partner. We have scouted for nearly every general in West Virginia and northern Virginia. We have credentials from them all. We last scouted for General Pope. We were regularly recorded as scouts by him."

"Why then did you not report to me when I assumed command?"

"After the battle of Manassas Junction, Jim and I took a scout on our own hook. We went south nearly to Winchester, and then came back through Harper's Ferry. General, you should remember me. I am the boy who took the dispatch to Burnside when your orderly was killed."

McClellan looked at him sharply. "So you are," he exclaimed. "It is late, but allow me to thank you now. From your brother I understood you were

just from Winchester, but from your story that was before the battle of Antietam."

"No, we did not get to Winchester then. We have been there since the battle."

McClellan looked at the boys in astonishment. "You seem to pass in and out of the enemy's lines with impunity," he exclaimed. "Who sent you to Winchester this time?"

"No one. Even my brother did not know we were going. Jim and I frequently go on these scouts. Our commission is rather a roving one. I will confess my going this last time was more on private than public business, but while there I learned things which I thought important."

Bob then told what he had learned.

"This is indeed important," said the general. "It has been thought Lee might make a stand at Winchester. From your story he has no intention of doing so nor of invading Pennsylvania. This leaves me free to make a movement I have been contemplating. From whom did you get your information?"

"That I am sorry to say I cannot tell, General. I am under the most solemn promise. But I will vouch for the reliability of the information."

McClellan frowned, then said, "Perhaps it is for the best. Your information tallies with what my other scouts report. You give as facts what they give as rumors. I must enroll you boys as scouts. I need just such ones as you appear to be."

Bob thanked him saying, "We will report tomorrow, General."

"That is certainly great information," said Clayton as they were going back to his tent. "I believe

McClellan will move at once. What did you mean by saying it was more private business than public that took you to Winchester?"

"I went to see whether my interview with Agnes Somers had become known. The fears you expressed worried me, and I went to find what had happened."

At the mention of Agnes, General Hunter started, then asked eagerly, "What did you find?"

"It had become known."

General Hunter gasped.

"Clayton, she was not harmed," cried Bob. Then he told the entire story.

"What a girl!" cried the general.

"That's not all," continued Bob. "Her father is trying to force her to marry Major Kincaid, the fellow that was in that plot to have me declared a spy."

"And Agnes?" asked the general eagerly.

"She will have none of him, but her father seems determined. He fears she will marry a Yankee and he says he'll see her dead first."

"What Yankee?"

"I don't know of anyone in particular, but you know how many of our officers are very susceptible to the charms of these southern girls."

"It's strange Agnes has not married," said General Hunter.

"She certainly has had opportunities enough," replied Bob. "Maybe she loves someone secretly."

"Well, may she marry someone worthy of her," sighed the general.

His brother's interest in Agnes puzzled Bob, but he had little time to think of it for at last McClellan was ready to move.

After the battle of Antietam some short letters passed between Lincoln and McClellan. The president had been greatly disappointed that Lee's army had not been destroyed, and he was irritated by the constant complaints of McClellan; yet he hesitated to remove him.

McClellan was greatly encouraged by the reports given him and believed he had Lee at a great disadvantage. If he could only throw his army between Lee and Jackson, victory would be assured. He carefully planned his campaign, and October 20 his army crossed the Potomac at Berlin, five miles below Harper's Ferry. The whole Army of the Potomac was once more on the soil of Virginia.

It is said McClellan never appeared more of a general than when he started on this campaign. He seemed to have more confidence in himself, did not talk so much of defeat, and what was better, moved with unusual celerity for him.

General Lee was never more baffled as to what McClellan would do. He knew he was preparing to strike, but where? Lee's army was strung out for miles. He knew that if he faced any other general than McClellan his position would be dangerous, but he relied on McClellan's slowness to give him time to concentrate his army after he found what point McClellan was striking.

This time Lee would have been mistaken. He was led to believe McClellan was marching on Gordonsville, and began to concentrate his army at that point. This deception was to be kept up by strong demonstrations, while the main army was to march on the east side of the Blue Ridge and head directly for

Richmond. By the time this movement was discovered, McClellan would be twice as near Richmond as Lee.

Fate favored Lee.

All had gone well with McClellan up to this time, but November 9 a thunderbolt fell without a bit of warning. He had established his headquarters at Rectorstown. A driving snowstorm was raging, and there was no one in the tent with him but General Burnside. General Buckingham came riding up from Washington post-haste and handed McClellan a dispatch. He opened it and read:

> By the direction of the President of the United States it is ordered that Major-General McClellan be removed from the command of the Army of the Potomac, and that Major-General Burnside take command of the army.

Without a change of countenance; without a tremor in his voice, McClellan handed the dispatch to Burnside, saying, "Well, Burnside, you are to command the army."

McClellan's career as a general was ended.[1]

McClellan's removal caused great excitement in the army. What had happened? What was it for? No one seemed to know.

"What can it mean?" Bob asked his brother.

General Hunter shook his head. "I don't know —

[1] The author believes that a great blunder was committed when McClellan was removed at this time, and a greater blunder committed in the appointment of his successor. What influence led to his sudden removal the author does not know, but it may be the administration still feared that McClellan's slowness and extreme caution would again prove disastrous.

coming so sudden and at this time. You know I never had any confidence in McClellan as a general. I firmly believe he could have crushed Johnston's army at Manassas Junction in the fall of 1861; he could have walked into Richmond at the commencement of the Peninsula Campaign; his slowness cost us Harper's Ferry; and his failure not to renew the battle of Antietam was a crime. I am not only giving my own opinion, but the opinion of some of the best generals in the army. McClellan should have been removed after the battle of Antietam, but just now it looks like a great injustice."

"What do you think of his successor?" asked Bob.

"Robert, you are close-mouthed and I am not afraid to talk to you. I think it is the worst possible selection that could have been made. At the beginning of the war Burnside acquired great popularity from the Port Royal expedition which was more naval than military. Since then he has done nothing to distinguish himself. At Antietam he was a dismal failure. He should and could have carried that bridge early in the day. As it was, he only carried it at the positive command of McClellan. In my opinion, Sumner, Meade, or Hooker would have been much better appointments. In fact I could name a dozen different corps and division commanders whom I believe are his superiors. But we must hope for the best."

It was the habit of General Hunter freely to discuss with Bob the different campaigns. He knew what he said would go no further, and he found Bob remarkably well posted. Sometimes they would differ, and Bob would hold up his end of the argument

in a manner that put the general to flight. "Bob, you will some day be superseding me," he would say laughingly.

Shortly after General Burnside assumed command of the army Bob and Jim were summoned to his headquarters. Wondering what it meant the boys lost no time in reporting.

"I understand that you boys are well acquainted with the country in north Virginia and especially around Winchester," said Burnside.

"I lived in Winchester for years," replied Bob, "and we are both well acquainted with the whole country."

"Good!" exclaimed the general. "I have heard of your success as scouts and that is why I sent for you. It is rumored that Winchester has been abandoned by Lee, and the whole Confederate army is on the march south. Owing to the movement I am about to make, it is important that I know the facts. I am going to order General Geary at Harper's Ferry to make a reconnoissance from that place to Winchester, if possible. I wish you to accompany him as guides and scouts."

"We are at your service, General," replied Bob saluting.

"It will be necessary for you to start at once, for I have telegraphed General Geary to start in the morning."

"We will be ready to start in five minutes," replied Bob. "We have good horses."[1]

[1] General Hunter had kept the horses the boys had when they joined him at Antietam.

CHAPTER XVI

BACK TO WINCHESTER

DAY was just dawning when the boys rode into Harper's Ferry. They found the force intended to make the reconnoissance to Winchester already falling in.

"Where is General Geary?" asked Bob.

He was pointed out and Bob, riding up to him, saluted and handed him his credentials from General Burnside.

The general said he was glad they had arrived and asked when they got in.

"Just now," answered Bob. "We rode all night."

"We are ready to start, and you have had no rest," said the general.

"That makes no difference," laughed Bob. "Jim and I are used to going without rest. We are ready for duty, General."

"Good!" exclaimed the general. "Burnside says you are well acquainted with the country."

"I was raised in Winchester," replied Bob, "and know every road and bypath around it."

"I am glad to hear that. I shall depend on you, for if Jackson has not left Winchester I may run into serious trouble."

The force was quite a strong one, consisting of 3,200 infantry, fifty cavalrymen, and three batteries.

"Hold on, Lieutenant, the other way," said Bob. To his astonishment the lieutenant found himself looking into the muzzle of a revolver.

The ladies screamed and the lieutenant, turning pale, stammered, "What does this mean?"

"It means we are Federal, not Confederate scouts," said Bob. "Come on."

The ladies had by this time recovered from their fright and the younger one was furious.

"You miserable, lying, Yankee thieves," she cried, stamping her foot. "I will live to see you hung."

"Don't feel so badly," replied Bob. "We will treat him kindly, and no doubt he will be paroled so he can return to you."

For answer the young lady flounced into the house and the boys rode away with their prisoner, finding by the time they reached the troops that skirmishing had already commenced.

"Only two regiments in front, General," reported Bob.

General Geary questioned the lieutenant, but he refused to answer, only glaring at Bob, as if he would like to kill him.

"Don't blame him for being surly, General," said Bob. "We interrupted a very pleasant conversation the lieutenant was having with a beautiful young lady who was so rude as to hope she would see me hung."

"So that's the way the wind blows," laughed the general. Turning to the lieutenant he asked, "How would you like to be paroled and go back and finish your visit?"

The prisoner's face brightened. "Very much," he replied.

"All right, but you will have to walk back. We need your horse."

The parole was given and the lieutenant went away happy.

The enemy was driven through Berryville without trouble. The cavalry followed to see if they halted or continued their flight. They found them about a mile from the village posted in a strong position.

The cavalry charged, but at the first fire they wheeled and rode away as if in confusion. After them came the Confederates with wild yells. General Geary was prepared for them and when the cavalry had passed through the lines he opened on them, and they went back full as fast as they had come. The Federals followed and drove them from their strong position. As Geary only had fifty cavalrymen it was idle to attempt to pursue them in their flight.

The Federals went into camp for the night, while the boys went on a scouting expedition. They soon returned with five citizens.

"General," said Bob, "these fellows tell such conflicting stories you had better question them yourself."

Two of the men declared that all the Confederate infantry had left, one was uncertain, and the other two declared there was at least a corps encamped near Millwood, and that Winchester was fortified and strongly held.

The bold front put up by the cavalry rather led General Geary to believe there might be a strong infantry force near. He determined to investigate the Millwood story first; so leaving half his force at Berryville, he started for Millwood with the rest.

Upon reaching that place it was found that it had been occupied by the corps of A. P. Hill but that he had been gone five days.

Convinced now that the infantry had left northern Virginia, Geary reunited his force and started for Winchester.

The place was found to be held by a regiment of cavalry that made a show of resistance, but after a parley, fled. The mayor surrendered the city, and Winchester had again changed hands.

"Never knew there were so many Union folks in this place," said Jim.

Bob himself was surprised. From numerous houses the Stars and Stripes were floating, and a large crowd on the street greeted the soldiers with enthusiastic cheers.

"Winchester seems to be more union than rebel," said General Geary to Bob. "I was under the impression it was wholly rebel."

"Perhaps the inhabitants keep two sets of flags," answered Bob. "The Stars and Stripes for us and the stars and bars for when the rebels come."

The general laughed heartily, saying, "There may be something in that."

Bob's first thought was that he could now visit his aunt without fear of compromising her. But to his disappointment he learned she had left with her husband when Jackson's corps moved south. The Somers family had also gone.

Bob was recognized by many of his old acquaintances. Some came and shook hands with him, others scowled and turned away. "Hello, Bob! Not hung yet?" yelled someone from the crowd.

A boy about Robert's age came up saying, "Glad to see you, Bob." He held out his hand with averted face.

Bob looked at him a moment and said, "I don't care about shaking hands with you, Ned Hargrave. I've not forgotten that little plot you helped fix up on me. By the way, Tom Stratton was killed at Antietam. Why are you not in the army?"

"I heard Tom was killed," muttered Hargrave as he turned away.

When Bob found he was to come to Winchester he remembered the articles he had taken from Tom Stratton's body and had brought with him. It was a good opportunity to return them.

Just before reaching the Stratton residence Bob saw a party of soldiers leaving it with two prisoners. "Where did you find them?" he asked the sergeant in charge.

"Hidden in that old rebel's house. We got a tip they were there. Ought to burn the place, but we have orders to destroy no property."

Bob found the house closed and the curtains tightly drawn. By making a big racket and demanding to be let in he at last succeeded in getting the door slightly open. A servant inquired in a trembling voice what he wished.

"To see Mr. Stratton on important business," replied Bob.

The servant still hesitated, looking at Bob's rough clothes.

"Let him in, Susan," Bob heard Mrs. Stratton say. "He can do no more than kill us."

Bob found Mr. and Mrs. Stratton sitting alone in

a darkened room. They neither wanted to see or to be seen by any one. The finding of the hidden soldiers had filled them with rage. Mr. Stratton thought some of his Union neighbors had given him away and he was uttering maledictions on their heads.

When Bob entered, Mr. Stratton sprang to his feet. "Robert Hunter! You here!" he exclaimed. "What new insult do you bring?"

"I have not come to insult you, Mr. Stratton, but on what I thought might be a deed of kindness, sad as it is. I came to speak of Tom."

"He has been murdered! You bloody Yankees murdered him!" almost shouted Mr. Stratton. "You, Robert Hunter, hated him. You were his deadly enemy. It was on your account he fled from home and enlisted. Why do you come here to taunt me?"

"Mr. Stratton, you misunderstand my visit. At one time your son and I were playmates. Whatever wrong I think he has done me is forgotten. Do you recognize these things?" He spread out on a table the things he had brought.

"They are Tom's," cried Mrs. Stratton, clasping them, tears running down her face.

"How did you come by them?" asked Mr. Stratton chokingly.

Bob told the story as gently as he could.

"His body was not mistreated?" asked Mr. Stratton.

"No, it was buried reverently and gently, and his grave is marked so you can remove the body after the war."

"Thank you," sobbed the bereaved mother as Bob bade them good-bye.

Bob lost no time in paying a visit to Rachel Keene. From her he expected to get the news he was anxious to hear. He found her on the porch preparing to go somewhere and surrounded by neighbors.

"Robert, I am glad to see you," she cried. "So you came with the soldiers. I was prepared for them." She pointed to a small flag above her door.

"Did the Confederates let it remain while they were here?" asked Bob.

"Yes, they are good to me. They know I mean them no harm."

"Rachel, I see you are getting ready to leave home."

"Yes, I go to the smallpox hospital to nurse some poor men the Confederates left there. They are suffering from lack of care."

"Rachel Keene, you don't mean that?" said Bob in astonishment.

"Yes, why not?" she asked quietly. "I have been vaccinated; shall take all precautions; am not afraid, and the poor fellows need me."

Bob could only look at her in astonishment. What kind of a woman was she? Could she be what he believed her to be, and yet risk her life for suffering Confederates?"

"Robert, I would like to speak to you before I leave. No doubt you wish to hear of your uncle and his family."

Excusing herself to her friends, she led the way into the house, where she said, "I have much to tell you, Robert."

She told of the banquet and Major Kincaid's boast, of his promotion, and leaving for West Virginia.

"Then Agnes is well rid of him," said Bob.

"He will give the poor girl a good deal of trouble yet. I do not think her father has given up the thought of her marrying him. There is something back of her father's determination I don't understand."

Bob thought so too, but turned the conversation to inquiring for war news.

"When McClellan began his last movement," Rachel replied, "the Confederate officers were very much puzzled. I heard one general say the army was in very poor shape, strung out too much, and they had no idea where McClellan would strike. When he was removed they were very much elated. They said Burnside had changed the move and was moving slowly and they would have ample time to concentrate their army. There now is only a small force of cavalry left in northern Virginia. That is all I know."

"Thank you, Rachel. Your news is important, but I fear will do little good."

"I must go now. Good-bye, Robert."

"May God keep you, Rachel," replied Robert. "You are going into far greater danger than I."

"The Lord will protect," she answered.

When they went out they found an ambulance waiting. It had been loaded with delicacies contributed by the citizens from their meager larders.

Women blessed her and children kissed her hands. She waved her hand to them as she got into the

ambulance. It gave Bob a new insight into the character of Rachel Keene.

General Geary held Winchester but two days. He had found what he came for, and was going back to Harper's Ferry. Before he left he paroled two hundred prisoners he had taken. When he moved out, the Confederate cavalry moved in, and Winchester once more changed hands.

"Jim, I've a mind not to go back to Harper's Ferry with General Geary," said Bob. "A big battle is impending, and we can reach the army quicker if we strike for Warrenton. I believe we can make it. Let's try anyway."

"It will be more exciting than going back with the troop," answered Jim.

When the general was told of their plans he said it would be a dangerous trip, but they might be able to find out something important. "But your horses?" he asked. "You surely do not intend to try to make such a trip on horseback."

"No," replied Bob. "If you will see that they are forwarded to the army, in care of General Hunter, I will be much obliged."

"That I will," said the general. "They will come into good use going back, too. Some of my staff are very poorly mounted."

The boys accompanied the force a few miles out of Winchester and then, giving up their horses, bade the general good-bye and watched the troop ride out of sight. The country they were in was rough and wooded: and as long as they kept to the hills they had little fear of discovery.

"It cannot be more than fifteen or twenty miles to

the Shenandoah," said Bob. "We ought to reach it by night."

"What then?" asked Jim.

"We will try to cross it and gain the Blue Ridge. Once there I think we will have no trouble in reaching Warrenton."

The boys found the traveling so slow they concluded to take the road, believing they could avoid any squads of cavalry by keeping a sharp lookout.

This they did two or three times, but once they were nearly captured, escaping amid a shower of bullets, and taking shelter amid the rocks and trees of a high hill.

"That was a run," panted Bob as the boys halted to recover their breath. "I wonder if they will try to follow us."

"No, they be ridin' away," said Jim. "Catch a cavalryman climbin' a mounting if he can help it."

This close call made the boys more careful, and when night came they were close to the Shenandoah. Across the river loomed the rocky heights of the Blue Ridge. It was December, and the waters of the river were decidedly chilly.

"We will try swimming only as a last resort," said Bob. "We may be able to find a boat."

"Not likely in the dark," replied Jim. "Let's try that house before it is too dark."

There was a large house near them, but a company of cavalry was camped near it. They knew the bank of the river must be closely guarded.

"Thar must be boats thar," said Jim, "and guarded or not I mean to have one."

There was a half-moon shining which made it easy

to see. A number of negro cabins were on the place, and making their way along carefully the boys soon gained their shelter. Many of the cabins they found deserted, making fine places for hiding.

From the house came the sound of laughter and music. The cavalry officers were enjoying themselves.

"So much the better," said Bob.

Creeping along they gained the bank of the river.

"I see what looks like a boathouse," said Jim. "And I believe there is a boat fastened outside."

Bob touched his arm, "Look!" he whispered, pointing to the figure of a guard a short distance from them.

"That feller must be got rid of," whispered Jim. "You wait here."

The guard stood leaning on his gun listening to the sounds of gaiety from the house. He yawned and muttered, "Wish I was an officer."

Bob could see Jim dimly. He was creeping up on the sentinel without a sound. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, and brought the butt of his carbine down with great force on the sentinel's head. He sank down without a moan.

"Quick, the boat," said Jim as he ran towards Bob. To their dismay they found the boat fastened with a stout lock.

"We must find something to break the lock," whispered Bob.

Jim was feeling around. "The house is not locked," he announced.

Bob went in, carefully closed the door and lit a match. To his joy he found it was a toolhouse as

well as a boathouse and a large hammer lay at hand. He secured it and groped his way out.

"That will make a noise," said Jim.

"Can't help it, it's the only way. Stand ready with your carbine."

Bob struck the lock a vicious blow, but it was stout and did not yield. He struck again.

"What's that?" cried a voice. Then, "Sentinel, someone is trying to steal the boat."

Bob struck blow after blow. If it did not yield immediately they would have to take to the river. They would then lose their arms and indeed be fortunate if they ever succeeded in reaching the other side.

One more blow and the lock smashed.

"Now!" cried Bob. Both sprang into the boat, falling flat as they did so. The shock sent the boat out into the stream just as a volley was fired. The balls cut the air just above their heads.

Bob wrenched a seat from the boat and tried to guide it across the river, but the current was swift and carried them down stream.

The alarm now was general, and men were running down the bank of the river firing at the dim outline of the boat, but the boys reached the other bank in safety.

"Thar may be other boats, and they may follow us," said Jim.

"If we can gain the ridge they may follow all they wish," replied Bob.

The bank was steep, but they managed to clamber up and began climbing the mountain. In the dark they could make little progress.

"Might as well camp and wait for morning," said Bob. "No danger of their finding us here."

The night passed quietly and in the morning the boys crossed the ridge and found themselves near Rectorville. But now there were no Federal troops there.

"Jim, I believe we had better cross over to Bull Mountain and make our way to Warrenton by Thoroughfare Gap," said Bob. "I do not believe we will find any of our troops this side of Warrenton."

They found the valley traversed by roving bands of cavalry, and decided to reach Bull Mountain as soon as possible and make their way along its summit. It would not only be safer, but would give them a wide view of the country.

They crossed the valley without trouble, and after a hard climb found themselves once more on top of Bull Mountain. They could see several squads of cavalry, but at such a distance it was impossible to tell whether they were Confederate or Federal. As they neared the gap they became aware that a skirmish was in progress. A company of Federals had passed through the gap, but had been met by a squadron of Confederates and put to flight. They were being closely pursued.

"Jim, I believe we can help those fellows if they can hold out until they get through the gap," said Bob.

"I reckin we can," replied Jim fingering his carbine.

Quickly making their way along they reached the mouth of the gap just as the foremost of the Federals came galloping through. Their horses were winded,

and it would only be a matter of minutes before they were caught.

Concealed behind rocks the boys had to wait but a minute before the foremost of the Confederates came up. Already some of the Federals had halted, and were holding up their hands in surrender.

"Now," said Bob.

The boys opened fire and the horses of the first Confederates went down. They soon emptied their carbines, but before they could load there was not a Confederate in sight. Thinking they had run into an ambuscade they had hastily retreated.

The Federals, expecting to see a company, were astonished when only the boys stepped out.

"Are you the only ones?" asked the captain.

"You see all there is of us," answered Bob. "Glad we were able to be of a little assistance."

"Little assistance!" exclaimed the captain. "You saved us." He caught the boys' hands and wrung them.

Explanations were made, and the captain asked if he could do anything for them.

"Get us to Warrenton as soon as you can," was the reply.

"We are going to Warrenton," was the reply, "but as you see, our horses are about used up. I intend to go into camp and wait until morning."

"Can't you let us have two of your freshest horses?" asked Bob. "We have important information and must get through."

"I will do anything for you," replied the captain. "Not only can you have the horses, but I'll send two men with you as guides."

The boys opened fire

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It was now night and after letting the horses rest a little they started. Morning found them in Warrenton. There was no army there. Only an outpost. The army was before Fredericksburg, and a battle might be fought any moment.

Fresh horses were furnished them, and the boys were soon riding for Fredericksburg.

CHAPTER XVII

FREDERICKSBURG

"HEAR that?" said Bob as they neared Falmouth and the booming of cannon reached them.

"They be fightin' for sure," said Jim.

"We will be late," mourned Bob. "I wouldn't have missed the battle for anything."

Bob was mistaken, the battle had not been fought. The cannonading was occasioned by General Burnside trying to lay pontoon bridges across the river. He was protecting the soldiers working on the bridge by his artillery, and the firing was heavy.

At last the boys reached General Hunter's headquarters.

"Back so soon!" he exclaimed. "I thought you would still be at Winchester. Was the expedition a success?"

"It was," replied Bob. "General Geary found out all he wished to know. I wonder if he has reported to General Burnside yet."

"I do not know," replied the general. "What did you find out?"

Bob told him.

"So all of the infantry has left Virginia and Lee has a united army; I was afraid of it. We must see Burnside quickly. If Geary has not reported, your news is important."

Together they went to Burnside's headquarters. The general was surprised when he saw the boys. "Why, you did not go with Geary after all!" he exclaimed.

"We certainly did," replied Bob. "Have you not heard from him?"

"I have not," answered the general.

"Then he could not have reached Harper's Ferry yet. We left him a few miles out of Winchester on his way back to the Ferry. We struck across the country for Warrenton."

"In leaving him you must have come through a country held by the enemy," said Burnside.

"Yes, but we only had trouble once. That was in crossing the Shenandoah. If General Geary has not reported I am here to tell all I can."

General Burnside listened attentively to all Bob had to say.

"You are sure there is no infantry left in northern Virginia?" he asked.

"Perfectly sure, General. A. P. Hill's corps left five days before we reached Millwood. General Lee has had ample time to concentrate his entire army."

"It is no more than I expected," replied Burnside. He then asked Bob many questions, and at last dismissed him thanking him for what he had done.

"How have things been going?" Bob asked his brother as soon as they were alone.

"As bad as can be," was the answer. "As much of a failure as I consider McClellan, I believe Burnside a greater one. McClellan was ready to strike when he was removed. The first thing Burnside did was to change all McClellan's plans. The troops

making the demonstrations towards Gordonsville were withdrawn against the earnest protests of General Hooker. Then Burnside decided to move on Fredericksburg by way of the Rappahannock.[1]

"Instead of crossing the river by the upper fords as expected, he has moved his entire army down the north side and here we are before Fredericksburg and Lee's entire army in front to oppose us.

"General Sumner earnestly requested that he be allowed to take his Grand Division across the river and move down the south side but was emphatically refused. Burnside seems to think it easier to cross a river in the face of a large army than to cross unopposed."

"Do you think you will be able to cross here?" asked Bob.

"Yes, but after we cross, the heights are beyond us. Wait and see. We shall make the attempt tomorrow."

What his brother had said made Bob pass a very restless night. Was the army to suffer another defeat?

Morning came, and protected by a furious cannonade the pontoniers began to lay the bridge. It was deadly work, for the opposite bank was lined with sharpshooters concealed in houses and cellars, and the fire of the cannon failed to drive them away. As they worked, men would topple over and fall into the

1 Lincoln reluctantly gave his consent to this movement, and then, contrary to the President's expectations, Burnside moved down the north instead of the south bank of the river. Halleck says this movement was contrary to orders. Burnside, himself, says he made the movement contrary to the opinions of the President, the Secretary of War, and of Halleck.

river. Others would fall on the bridge, dyeing it red with their blood.

When about half over, all the pontoniers came rushing back. They would face that deadly fire no longer. Threats of instant death failed to move them. It was death to go back.

The only thing to be done was to cross the river in boats and drive the enemy away. Who would man the boats? The pontoniers refused.

Then the Seventh Michigan regiment came to the rescue. "We will go," they cried; "let the pontoniers row us over."

Again the pontoniers refused to move.

"We will row ourselves then," cried the Seventh.

All the forenoon Bob and Jim had watched the building of the bridge. They saw the retreat and the refusal of the men to go back. With rage they saw the refusal to row the boats. Bob swung his hat on high when he saw the brave men of the Seventh preparing to cross. "Jim, let's go with them," he said. "We can row."

Jim was nothing loath. The action of the pontoniers had filled him with disgust.

The officer in command of the boats was surprised to be accosted by two boys asking the privilege of rowing one of the boats. "It will release two of your men for firing," said Bob.

Taking them for two of the pontoniers the officer said, "I am glad there are two brave ones among so many cowards. Come on!"

The boats were pushed away. Hardly had they started when balls began to hiss past them. The water looked as if a hail storm was beating its surface.

How those men did row. No college team bent on winning the pennant ever rowed as those men. The strength of ten men was in each arm.

Bob saw the soldier rowing in front of him drop his oar and sink down in the boat. Now and then a soldier would fall, but there was no stop, no stay. They were across!

The soldiers sprang out and charged the houses and the victory was won.

The bridge was completed and the troops began to pass over. Other bridges had been built with less trouble, and by morning the army was over and ready for battle. By night it lay crushed and bleeding, hopelessly defeated.[1]

[1] At the battle of Fredericksburg, Burnside had an army of about 113,000 men, Lee between 80,000 and 90,000; but the strong position held by the Confederates more than compensated for the difference in numbers.

Burnside had divided his army into three grand divisions commanded by Generals Sumner, Hooker, and Franklin. Franklin's division consisted of 60,000 men, over half of the army. But in the battle he failed, as he always failed. Why he was given such an important command is one of the enigmas of the war. Of his division of 60,000 men only two divisions were severely engaged, those commanded by Meade and Gibbons. These two divisions fought heroically and won an important position, but were forced to give it up on account of not being supported.

On these two divisions and the grand divisions of Sumner and Hooker fell the brunt of the battle.

The loss of the Federal army was 12,653, that of the Confederate army about 5,000.

The sun that went down on that dark December day left the North in darkness and despair. But two weeks later from out of the west came a star of hope — Rosecrans' great victory at Murfreesboro.

From that time the star of the Confederacy began to decline, never more to rise.

It is only the part taken by General Hunter's brigade that has place in our story.

When the boys returned from helping row the boats they found General Hunter's brigade ready to cross the river.

"Where have you been all this time?" asked the general.

"Helping row the Seventh Michigan over the river. When we saw those cowardly pontoniers refuse to go, Jim and I thought we'd take a hand, so we volunteered to help. Here's a paper the officer in charge of the boat we were in gave me."

It was a statement telling of the service the boys had rendered and was highly eulogistic.

"What in the world will you boys be up to next?" exclaimed the general. "I saw those men go over in the boats. It was as brave a deed as I have ever witnessed. Well, boys, you have done enough. Stay on this side of the river, for unless I am mistaken, this will be one of the bloodiest battles of the war."

"Clayt," said Bob looking earnestly at his brother. "I nearly killed two horses to get here to be with you in this battle. Do you think I will desert you now? I served as volunteer orderly on the Peninsula for you. Why not let me now? You may need me."

"Yes, Bob, come. I know I cannot keep you out of it, and I'd rather have you with me than anywhere else. There is a fatigue blouse behind my saddle. Put that on and you will look more like an orderly."

Bob took the blouse and tore off the shoulder straps, saying, "Don't believe I want to masquerade as a general. It might get me into trouble."

"I forgot all about the straps," the general replied with a smile. "There, now you make a very respectable looking orderly."

"General, you have forgot me," said Jim in a grieved tone. "What be I goin' to do?"

"Better stay on this side, boy."

"What! And let Bob go? I'll go if I have to swim the river. General, I heard someone say there was a regiment of sharpshooters. Let me go with them; I can shoot. Ask Bob."

"I doubt if there is a man in Colonel Berdan's regiment who can beat him," said Bob.

"There's a battalion of sharpshooters now," said the general. "I will speak to the captain in charge."

The captain said one of his men was sick, and he was about to excuse him and the boy could take his place if he could shoot.

"Ten to five he can beat any man in your company," said the general.

"I'll take that and report after the battle," said the captain.

Jim took the sick soldier's equipments and went away happy.

After crossing the river, the brigade of General Hunter formed a line of battle and moved forward. Through the streets of Fredericksburg the conflict raged. Every house was a flaming fort, but the foe was pushed back, and at last before the Federals was a stone wall and the Confederate main line of battle.

That wall must be charged; that line broken. The command was given and the soldiers pressed forward. The wall became a raging volcano of flame and smoke.

Hundreds fell, but with wild cheers the line pressed on. It became thin, reeled, staggered and fell back.

General Hunter reformed his shattered lines. "Boys," he cried, "that wall must be taken. Your general will lead you." On foot, sword in hand, he led the way. With wild cheers his men followed him.

Again the wall flamed and smoked, but against that wall of death the men hurled themselves. The roar of the conflict drowned the cries of the wounded and the groans of the dying. Every second the line grew thinner, but the living kept on.

When General Hunter sprang to the ground to lead the charge, Bob was by his side.

"Keep back," ordered the general.

Bob stepped back but when the line started, he started too, snatching up the gun of a dead soldier.

With bowed heads as if they would shield themselves from the storm of death which beat against them the soldiers rushed on. A color bearer just in front of Bob staggered and fell. Bob dropped his gun and snatched up the flag. Now he was by his brother's side. A few yards more and the wall would be reached.

It happened that this part of the Confederate line was held by a division commanded by General Clayton. After the first charge had been repulsed the general had come down to be with his men to encourage them. He knew another charge would come. When it did it seemed as if nothing could stop the rush.

Through the swirling smoke General Clayton caught a glimpse of an officer leading his men. By his side waved a flag upheld by brave hands.

The Confederates caught sight of the flag and believing it backed by a strong line wavered.

"Steady, men! Steady!" shouted General Clayton, and snatching a revolver from his belt, fired.

It was a random shot but the flag went down. The charge was broken.

The ball had not hit Bob, but his brother. In falling he fell against Bob who dropped the flag to catch him.

How Bob got back alive with the general he could not tell. Men fell all around him but through that storm of death he managed to drag his brother. He knew he was not dead for he could feel his heart beating. At last he reached a place of comparative safety. A stretcher bearer was summoned and the general carried back to the ambulances.

Bob now for the first time had a chance to look and see where his brother was hit. About an inch under the right eye was a red spot from which blood was flowing. Bob staggered, a lump came in his throat which nearly strangled him. His brother was shot through the head, there was no hope. Still, he breathed, he was alive, he might recover consciousness and speak.

As far as Bob was concerned the noise of battle now fell on dull ears. He accompanied the ambulance back across the river to the field hospital where already hundreds of the wounded had been taken. A surgeon looked at the general and said, "Shot through the head. We can do nothing for him."

In the report sent to Washington that night was the name of General Clayton Hunter as mortally wounded.

All Bob could do was to sit by his brother's side watching for the end.

During the night General Hunter came to. "Where am I?" he faintly asked.

Joy sprang to life in Bob's heart. His brother could speak. He might live.

"You are in a hospital," Bob whispered. "I am with you. Be quiet."

The general seemed to be struggling with some remembrance, then asked in a broken voice, "The wall! Did we take the wall?"

"Do be quiet, Clayt," plead Bob. "You have been badly hurt. We will talk about that when you are better."

The general groaned.

"What is it?" asked Bob.

"My face, my neck; oh how they ache!"

For the first time Bob began to take notice. The shot had not gone through the general's head. The bleeding from the wound had not been excessive. A wild hope sprang up in his heart. The wound might not be mortal. He looked up a surgeon. "I wish you would come and examine the wound of General Hunter carefully," he said. "I do not believe it is as bad as has been thought."

"Why, boy, he was shot through the head!" exclaimed the surgeon. "There is no hope for him."

"Not through the head, Doctor. The ball did not go through. He complains of his neck. I believe the ball glanced downwards."

"I will come as soon as I finish this job," said the doctor.

Bob went back and soon the surgeon came and

carefully inserted his probe into the wound. In a moment his countenance lighted up. "You are right," he exclaimed. "The ball struck the cheek bone and glanced down. You say he complains of his neck? Let's see." He examined the neck. "Here it is," he cried. "It can be extracted, but not here. He had better wait until we get him to Washington."

"Then he will get well?" cried Bob.

"I can't say, but the wound is not necessarily a mortal one. His chances are good. If blood poison does not develop he will be a well man in two months."[1]

For the first time since his brother was shot, Bob sobbed.

General Burnside did not renew the battle, but the second day after the fight withdrew across the river.

The day after the army was withdrawn Jim showed up.

"How did it go, Jim?" asked Bob.

Jim looked his disgust. "Bob, would you believe it," he exclaimed. "That first day we did not get into the fight at all. Then that night they put us in the blamedest place and gave us orders not to shoot unless the rebs charged. Jest think, sharpshooters not to shoot!

"We lay in a place whar one couldn't show a finger but what a dozen balls would come for it. Thar we had to lie all day huggin' the ground. A number of the boys got hit as it was. Shucks! If they call that

[1] An officer in the regiment to which the author belonged was wounded in exactly the same way as it is said General Hunter was wounded. He recovered and served during the remainder of the war.

sharpshooting in the army I've had enough of it. But your brother got hit, didn't he?"

"Yes, but I believe he is going to get well."

"Awfully glad, but yo' tell him I don't want any more sharpshootin'."

General Hunter was removed to Washington where in due time the ball was extracted from his neck. The operation was a delicate one, but proved successful.

"Here is the fellow that did the mischief," said Bob showing his brother the bullet.

General Hunter took the ball and examined it carefully. "Why, it's a ball from a revolver," he exclaimed. "We must have been closer to that wall than I thought."

In a few days Bob reported that Burnside was to make another move.

"Keep me posted, Bob," said the general. "You know the surgeons will not allow me to read. This wound affects the eyes."

Bob did keep him posted. When the movement had failed Bob said, "That movement has come to nothing. This time the elements took a hand. You know how it has rained lately. Well, the army got stuck in the mud. Burnside was to cross the river above Fredericksburg where he ought to have crossed before, where Sumner wished to cross. This time the mud prevented it. The soldiers tell the funniest stories of their experiences. They declare it was no uncommon thing to see a mule's ears sticking above the mud, all the rest of him had disappeared, and they say they had to carry fence rails to pry each other out of the mud. They have dubbed it 'The Mud March.'"

As the "Mud March" it has gone down in history.

"All General Jackson's doin'," said Jim. "He jest prayed for that rain. Bob, I tell yo' thar's no use fightin' Jackson. He's got the Lord on his side. The prayers of General Howard don't amount to shucks."

In a few days Bob came rushing to his brother's bedside. "Good news, Clayt," he cried. "General Burnside has been removed and General Hooker appointed in his place."

"It certainly can't be worse, and it may be better," said the general. "Hooker is an abler general than Burnside, and is a fighter. I am disappointed, however, it ought to have been Sumner."

"I have not told you all the news," replied Bob. "Sumner has asked to be released."

"What!" cried his brother. "Sumner wants to be released? The ablest general in the army! If he had been in command instead of Burnside there would have been a different story to tell of Fredericksburg. I don't blame Sumner for asking to be released, but the Army of the Potomac has lost its best general. What are they thinking of in Washington? Mistakes! Mistakes from the very beginning. I hope Hooker will prove the man for the place. But Sumner gone! I can hardly believe it."[1]

[1] The author, like General Hunter, has wondered, while reading the history of the Army of the Potomac, why General Sumner was not offered the command. Up to the time he asked to be released, he had proved by all odds the ablest general in the army.

It was Sumner who led his corps to battle at Fair Oaks and snatched victory out of defeat. It was Sumner who during the retreat to the James, made the stand at Glendale

and hurled back the exultant foe after McCall's division had been crushed. It was he who remained on the field until all the other corps had gone, then sullenly withdrew, the last to arrive at Malvern Hill.

It was Sumner's corps that bore the brunt of the battle at Antietam, his one corps suffering nearly one-half of the loss in that battle.

Again, at Fredericksburg, his grand division sustained nearly one-half of the loss. No wonder as he looked on his decimated command so needlessly slaughtered, he felt like retiring.

General Sumner lived but a short time after he was released from command. He was offered a command in the west, but on his way there was taken sick and died. Thus passed a man now scarcely known to the rising generation, yet one whose name should be placed among those of our greatest generals.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT THE BALL

GREAT was the rejoicing of the South over the victory at Fredericksburg. It more than atoned for what they had lost at Antietam. More than ever were they led to believe the independence of the South was only a question of a little time. In no place was the news of the victory received with greater joy than at the Somers' plantation.

General Clayton had not only passed safely through the battle but had won great honor. His division had defended the stone wall where the conflict had raged the fiercest, and where the Federal charge had been so bloodily repulsed.

Agnes Somers could not help sharing in the joy the others felt. Her great hope was that it would bring peace. In the midst of the joy there came a shadow. A Washington paper, one of the first published after the battle, fell into the hands of General Clayton, and among the list of mortally wounded was the name of Clayton Hunter.

The paper fell from the general's hands and he bowed his head in sorrow. His sister's child had fallen in battle, killed fighting his mother's kin. It was a just punishment, but it grieved him sorely. He had been very proud of his nephew. How would he have felt, if he had known that the shot that struck

his nephew down had been fired by himself? Mercifully he was spared that knowledge.

He wrote the news to his wife and daughter, saying, "I know you will be shocked as I was, but Clayton should not have turned against the South. There was no need of his going into the army. It is a consolation to know he died as he did, as a brave soldier should die. There is no disgrace in his death, nothing to regret except that he was fighting against us. He was a noble young man and as such we can remember and honor him. How different it will be if Robert should fall into our hands — deep, ever-lasting disgrace. I cannot but believe it was Clayton's influence that turned Robert to the Union, but Robert himself says that Clayton always opposed him in doing what he does. I only wish it was Robert that had been killed instead of Clayton."

"A letter from father," cried Helen, dancing into the room. "Oh! Aren't we proud of him! General Lee speaks of him in the highest praise."

With flying hands Helen opened the letter and commenced to read. She had not gotten far when she suddenly stopped and grew pale.

"What is it. daughter?" cried her mother. "Bad news?"

"Yes, mother, it is bad news, but not what you think it is. Cousin Clayton was killed at Fredericksburg; that is, father says he was mortally wounded."

She did not say more for with a cry Agnes fell to the floor. In the confusion and excitement the letter was forgotten for a time. The doctor came and prescribed absolute quiet saying she was in a highly nervous state.

"I wonder what made Agnes faint," said Mrs. Clayton to Helen. "Could it have been hearing of Clayton's death? It was a shock to you, Helen, but you did not faint. Poor Clayton, what a fine fellow he was. Could she have been really fond of him?"

"Mother, I don't wonder at Agnes' fainting at the slightest shock. Just think what she has gone through in the last few weeks. Her meeting Robert, and then her confession to save me. Think what a strain it would be having to confess to an interview with a spy. Then the attempt of her father to make her marry Major Kincaid. It is a wonder she is not a nervous wreck. Mother, there is something back of all this. Agnes would never talk of Clayton, even to me, and she tells me almost everything. You know what friends they were when Clayton used to visit her as a boy, then Clayton went to college and then to Europe and Agnes to school. But she was home the last time he was here in the fall of 1859, and I began to think there was something between them when Clayton left suddenly, and he has not been here since. Agnes declares they were nothing but friends, but something happened. I don't know what."

Just then Mrs. Somers came in saying Agnes wished to see Helen.

The girls were together a long time, and when Helen came back she said Agnes was afraid they would think it strange she fainted, but she had been feeling faint all day and the sudden shock of hearing that Clayton was killed overcame her.

"Do you know," she continued, "we never finished

father's letter; there was a clipping from a paper in it. Just hear this:

One of the bravest acts among the many brave ones enacted on the fatal field of Fredericksburg was performed by young Robert Hunter, who was acting as volunteer orderly to his brother, General Clayton Hunter. It was General Hunter's brigade that came the nearest to reaching the stone wall, and the charge was led by the general. Young Hunter snatched a flag from the dead hands of its bearer and sprang to the side of his brother, shouting, "Come on, Boys!"

When the general fell, there were few of his men near him, nearly all having been shot down. Young Hunter dropped the flag, all that remained of it, for it was literally shot to pieces, and picking up his brother carried him back through the storm of shot and shell. It was the deed of a hero.

Helen's eyes shone. "What do you think of that?" she cried. "Is not he a cousin to be proud of, even if they call him a spy!"

When Agnes read the extract she smiled and said, "It is just what might be expected of Robert."

A copy of the paper correcting the report that General Hunter was mortally wounded failed to reach General Clayton, and he was mourned as dead.

Shortly after General Burnside was removed from command and General Hooker appointed in his place, both armies went into winter quarters and for a time comparative quiet reigned. This gave many Confederate officers a chance to obtain leave of absence and visit their homes.

To all appearances Agnes Somers had fully recovered and was as gay as ever.

To vary the monotony of country life, General Clayton decided to take his wife and daughter on a visit to Richmond, and Mr. Somers concluded to accompany him with his family.

Richmond was very gay that winter. The southern people believed their independence was nearly gained, and parties and balls were popular.

Helen Clayton and Agnes Somers created a sensation among the unmarried officers. They were unanimously pronounced the belles of the capital. But General Crampton was there, and as it soon became known that he was the favored one for Helen, his brother officers called him a lucky dog and turned their attention to Agnes.

Among Agnes' admirers was a Colonel Monroe, a brave and gallant officer, whose family was a leading one in the state. It was soon seen that he was her favorite, and the others gradually fell away and left the field to him. It began to be whispered that Agnes Somers was caught at last.

At this time Colonel Kincaid suddenly appeared in Richmond. He had won distinction in West Virginia by making a sudden movement and defeating an inferior force, taking a number of prisoners. There was talk that it was only a matter of time when he would secure his commission as brigadier-general.

Kincaid had friends who had kept him informed as to how things were going at Richmond, and he lost no time in hurrying to that city. With a certain group of officers Kincaid was very popular. To their remarks that it was a shame for him to let Colonel Monroe takes Agnes Somers from him he would remark, "Just wait."

To all appearances he was gay and unconcerned. He made his first appearance at a dance and soon made his way to Agnes' side. She received him civilly, but coolly, and when he asked for a dance informed him that her program was full.

For a moment he looked black, then all smiles again, said he was sorry, and departed.

From that time he was the gayest at the dance, and many a fair daughter of Virginia felt it an honor to be asked by him to dance. But if one had noticed closely he would have seen that at every opportunity his eyes wandered in the direction of Agnes Somers.

In the morning Colonel Kincaid sought an interview with Mr. Somers, who met him with some uneasiness, for he was aware that he had gone farther than was wise in encouraging him in his pursuit of Agnes. The death of General Hunter had removed his fears from that source. He really preferred Colonel Monroe to Kincaid; so he had no desire to meet Kincaid, and wished he had not put in an appearance.

Colonel Kincaid was smiling and urbane, and after talking a little of his experiences in West Virginia said, "Mr. Somers, you were candid enough to tell me when I left for West Virginia that you did not think there was any hope for me with your daughter, but you would do what you could for me."

"I have, Colonel," replied Mr. Somers. "Agnes is well aware that I would be highly pleased if she would receive you with favor. I know you love her and my greatest wish is for her to marry a Confederate officer. But I have found out that for some reason she will not consider you. It is a matter of regret, Colonel. I may have given you more hope

than I should, as at that time, for reasons I cannot explain, I was very anxious she should marry."

"Did you fear her attachment for Robert Hunter?" suddenly asked the colonel.

"I did, to tell you the truth, but Agnes laughs at the idea, and I have come to the opinion that my fears were groundless."

"Judging from present appearances they were groundless," answered Kincaid with a bitter smile. "I notice I have a rival in the person of Colonel Monroe."

"It is a fair field, Colonel. I would welcome either of you as a son-in-law."

Kincaid bit his lip. "It is hard for me to give up Agnes," he replied. "You know how much I think of her. Without her, I do not care what becomes of me. But I wish no unwilling bride. Mr. Somers, I would like one more chance to see her and plead my cause. It seems as if my love must have some effect. Girls often change their minds. May I not have this last chance?"

"You may as far as I am concerned, Colonel. I will see Agnes and trust she will grant you this interview. Wait here."

Mr. Somers well knew what Agnes' answer would be, but he wished to show Colonel Kincaid every consideration possible.

He soon found Agnes and stated the colonel's wishes.

"Father," she cried, "how much longer must I stand the persecutions of this man? I will not see him. To end all this I will say that Colonel Monroe has asked me to be his wife. I am to give him his

answer tonight. I only wait to consult you, as I promised to marry no man without your consent. Give me that consent and my answer is yes, on condition the marriage does not take place until after the war."

"Why that condition, daughter?"

"I do not wish to marry while there is so much bloodshed, so much suffering, so many tears in the land. And I have no desire to be a widow, and no one can tell what a day may bring forth."

"A strange idea, Agnes. If you really love Colonel Monroe I should think you would wish to marry him at once, so if he should fall you would have the consolation of bearing the honored name of a brave officer who fell in defense of his country."

"I think Colonel Monroe will consent to wait," said Agnes with a smile. "Have I your consent?"

"You certainly have," he replied kissing her. "You have shown yourself a dutiful daughter, and I do not mind telling you that your choice has been a wise one. I much prefer Colonel Monroe to Colonel Kincaid. Monroe is a man, every inch of him."

"Thank you, Father. Now go tell Colonel Kincaid and he will understand why I will not see him."

Mr. Somers found the colonel pacing the floor nervously. Kincaid shot a quick glance at him and said, "I am afraid your mission has been a fruitless one."

"Sit down, Colonel," replied Mr. Somers. "I have learned something I did not know. Agnes informs me Colonel Monroe has asked her to be his wife and she is going to consent. I was surprised, as they have known each other such a short time."

"I suppose you will give your consent," said Kincaid with a sneer.

"I do not see how I can object as Colonel Monroe is in every way a fine young man."

"Much more so than your humble servant," said Kincaid sneering more than before.

"Look here, Colonel, I did not say that," said Mr. Somers with a little heat. "Had it been you I would have given my blessing just the same."

"Pardon me, Mr. Somers, but my heart is sore, very sore. I thought I would win Agnes in time. What did she say about seeing me?"

"Under the circumstances, you can see that she does not feel like seeing you. But I forgot to tell you — the wedding will not take place until the close of the war."

Mr. Somers did not notice the look of joy and triumph that swept over Kincaid's face.

"Convey my compliments to your daughter," he said. "Tell her I wish her all the happiness in the world, and while I shall ever carry her image in my heart, it will be only to bless her."

Mr. Somers looked after him with troubled eyes. "I hardly know what to make of him," he muttered. "He took it very differently from what I expected."

That night there was a grand ball at the governor's mansion. Well could the words of the poet Byron be quoted with the change of but one word:

There was a sound of revelry by night,
Virginia's Capital had gathered there
Her beauty and her Chivalry — and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;

A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell.

Agnes had given Colonel Monroe her answer, and while he had demurred at her condition, he agreed it was a wise one. He would have her in the end, and the prize that awaited him at the end of the war would be a star leading him on to deeds of valor.

The engagement was announced to the company and congratulations showered upon them. Some wondered that the wedding was to be postponed until the close of the war, but the governor in proposing a toast said, "Miss Somers is a true patriot. Let every one of our fair daughters reject marriage until the close of the war and our army will be full of heroes. Nothing could withstand us. The independence of the South would be doubly assured."

Such shouting and hurrahing! The ladies waved their handkerchiefs and cried, "You hear the conditions, gentlemen! May each of you return, a hero."

Much to the surprise of Agnes, Colonel Kincaid was at the ball and was among the first to congratulate the newly engaged couple. As he took Colonel Monroe's hand he said so that all around could hear, "Colonel Monroe, you have won the fairest lady in Virginia. It is no secret that I tried to win her for myself, but you have won the prize. The knowledge that you will make her happy, will make me happy. In the morning I go to my command in West Virginia, but before I go I trust you

will grant me the pleasure of a dance with your future wife."

Those around gasped at his boldness, but the request was made so neatly Colonel Monroe could not refuse, so he said, "It is as Agnes wishes."

How Agnes wished she could refuse, but that was impossible, so she said, "If it will give Colonel Kincaid pleasure he may surely have the dance. It will have to be towards the last, however, as my program is nearly full."

"Thank you," replied the colonel, bowing as he moved away.

"Rather cheeky," said one.

"He takes his defeat like a gentleman," said another.

Colonel Kincaid took no more notice of Agnes till the time came for their dance. He seemed the gayest of the gay, and devoted himself to entertaining his partners. Many a soft glance of the eye was given him which seemed to say, "There are others present as fair as she, who will not say you nay."

The time for the dance came. Agnes instinctively shrank at his touch, but during the dance he was civility itself. As the music died away he said, "Miss Somers, I go now. Will you not step into the conservatory for a moment; just inside the door where that palm will conceal us? I have a secret to tell you; one that greatly concerns you. I do not wish to tell it here for it may affect you. It has nothing to do with myself."

Agnes hesitated and asked, "Is it so important?"

"Of the greatest importance to you. It will only take a moment."

As it was but a few steps, and the slightest sound would attract attention, Agnes consented.

As they passed behind the palm he leaned over until his lips nearly touched her ear and whispered, "Agnes, you are for me, and me only." Before she could cry out he caught her in his arms, crushed her to his breast, pressed his lips again and again to hers, and was gone.

CHAPTER XIX

AGNES DISAPPEARS

AGNES was so stunned and surprised that she did not realize what was taking place until he had gone. She swayed and would have fallen if she had not clutched at a near-by palm. Just then a Captain Evart stepped into the conservatory and saw her. "Miss Somers, what is the matter?" he cried. "You look as if you were about to faint."

"I *am* faint," she gasped. "Take me to the air."

"Shall I call your mother?"

"No, thank you. I feel better already. The dance made me a little faint, and I thought I would step into the conservatory a moment, but the scent of the flowers almost overcame me. I think I would have fallen if you had not come. Please take me out on the porch where I can get some fresh air."

Captain Evart quickly complied with her request, and there they were found by Colonel Monroe.

In the few minutes that had passed the colonel had missed her, and had been anxiously looking for her.

"Why Agnes," he exclaimed, "how came you here?"

"Captain Evart brought me. I felt faint just as the dance ended, and asked the captain to take me to the air."

"She is not well yet, Colonel," said the captain. "She is all of a tremble."

The colonel was at once solicitous, and it was decided that Agnes should be taken home without delay.

"I ought not to have let you have that last dance with Colonel Kincaid," said her lover as they were seated in the carriage, "but the dog put me in a box. I could hardly see how to refuse."

Agnes shivered. Should she tell? No, if she told anyone it would be her father, so she only said, "He was nice enough during the dance, but his touch gave me the chills. Never let me dance with him again, Clyde."

"No danger. I'd rather slap his face. But I don't blame him for loving you. I don't see how anyone could help it."

"Oh! you flatterer," said Agnes, rewarding him with a kiss.

Agnes spent a sleepless night. Her cheeks burned with shame and indignation when she thought of Colonel Kincaid's kisses. Tell her lover she could not. Should she tell her father? That would mean that he or Colonel Kincaid would die, and the story would become known. But what if anyone had observed them? What if Captain Evart suspected something was wrong? It would be better for her to tell than to have it leak out through gossip. Thus she argued with herself all night.

In the morning Agnes had a slight fever and it was decided to go back home. Colonel Monroe accompanied her and Mrs. Somers, as Mr. Somers was to remain in the city a few days on business.

Agnes learned that Colonel Kincaid had left the city that morning. She had no opportunity to speak to her father before leaving, and the longer she put it off the less she felt like telling, so she decided to keep it a secret.

Mrs. Clayton and Helen remained a week longer in Richmond, and when they returned and nothing was said, Agnes knew there had been no gossip, and became convinced that no one had seen anything.

The few days that Colonel Monroe spent with her were happy ones, but the time came when he had to return to his regiment.

"I have more to live for now than ever," he said to her. "I hope in the next battle to gain a star."

"What if you should fall?" said Agnes, her gathering tears falling fast.

"It would be for the South, dearest, and you would be comforted by the thought that I had died doing my duty."

"That would not bring you back," she sobbed. "Oh, this terrible war! Will it never end?"

"One or two more victories like Fredericksburg and the South will be free," he replied. "The end will soon come."

The parting came, and with tear-dimmed eyes she watched the departing form of her lover.

"Agnes, if you are to be a soldier's wife, you must act like one," said Helen. "How do I send General Crampton to war? Not with sobs and tears, but with pride and joy. The pain in my heart I conceal."

"You are so much braver than I," said Agnes.

"Not braver, Agnes, only I have learned to conceal my feelings more. But with the bitter there is

sweet. You have more to live for now. You will watch the career of Colonel Monroe with eager eyes, and his letters will be more precious than diamonds."

So it proved. The first letter she received from the colonel was so full of life, so tender in its expressions of love, that her heart was filled with joy and comfort.

Agnes was a great favorite with the slaves on the plantation. She was their sweet young mistress and they fairly worshiped her. Aunt Hannah, a slave who had grown gray in the service of the family, was sick, and Agnes frequently visited her. Hannah and her aged husband occupied a cabin by themselves.

"Mother, I believe I will take Aunt Hannah a few things to eat," said Agnes one evening. "I have been so busy I have not been to see her lately."

"Better send one of the servants," said her mother. "It is getting dark."

"Why Mother, it's such a short distance there is no danger, and Aunt Hannah would be disappointed if I did not bring them myself. She says the sight of my eyes does her more good than medicine."

"Hannah is on old flatterer," laughed Mrs. Somers. "You may go, but don't stay long."

Something took Mrs. Somers' attention and it was over an hour later when she realized that Agnes had not returned.

"Howard, I wish you would go and see what is keeping Agnes," she said to her husband. "She said she would be right back. Can it be Hannah is worse?"

"She is probably telling Agnes one of her wonderful stories," replied Mr. Somers.

A quarter of an hour passed, and still the girl did not return.

"Howard, I am getting worried," cried Mrs. Somers. "If you don't go, I'll go myself."

"I'll go. It is a little queer she stays so long."

Mr. Somers was surprised to find the cabin dark. He knocked loudly at the door.

"Who dar?" cried Tom, Hannah's husband.

"Your master, open quick."

The negro shuffled across the floor and threw open the door.

"Why Massa —"

He did not finish for Mr. Somers cried, "Where is Agnes?"

"Agnes, bress her sweet eyes. She left heah moah than an hour ago. What's de mattah?"

"I don't know," groaned Mr. Somers. "She has not returned."

An alarm was given, but a careful search revealed no trace of Agnes. The neighborhood was aroused, and soldiers from Staunton were sent for to aid in the search, but morning came and there were no tidings of the missing girl.

Every one of the servants was questioned. All the light they could give was that three or four Confederate soldiers seemed to have been lounging around the place; but as Confederate soldiers were continually coming and going they had thought nothing of it.

One of the house servants had discovered a soldier lying in the shrubbery the day before, but when she found him he laughed and said he was tired and had lain down and must have fallen asleep. Then

he got up and started for Staunton as fast as he could go.

"Why didn't you tell this, Susan?" asked her master sternly.

"Massa, de sogers be thicker than flies. Did dat soger take Missy Agnes? Whip me, Massa! Kill me! Oh Lawd!" She threw her apron over her face and wept loudly.

"There, there," said Mr. Somers kindly, "you are not to blame. We would any of us die for her."

Never was there a greater sensation in or around Staunton. The whole country was searched. Streams were dragged, and the near-by mountains gone over as with a fine-toothed comb, but nothing came of it. It was as if the earth had opened, had swallowed Agnes, and then closed again.

The presence of the unknown Confederate soldiers naturally directed suspicion towards Colonel Kincaid, but he was found to have been with Jones on his raid at the time Agnes disappeared. He seemed greatly surprised and grieved, and said he would do anything in his power to aid in the search.

Many claimed it was the work of Robert Hunter. Among these was General Clayton. "That young devil will do anything," he exclaimed. "We all know how much he thought of Agnes. He's stolen her, as he could get her in no other way."

Only the Rappahannock rolled between the Federal and Confederate armies and intercourse was frequent, so it was no trouble for the general to find out that Robert Hunter was in Washington, and that theory had to fall. In his investigation, General Clayton found out more; he discovered that General Hunter

had not been killed but was in Washington, nearly recovered from his wound. This at any other time would have been important news but now it was scarcely noticed.

Three weeks elapsed, the mystery was as deep as ever, and all hope was given up. General Clayton and Colonel Monroe had to return to their commands. During this time Colonel Monroe had hardly slept or eaten. Now, hollow-cheeked and heart-broken, he went back to his command saying that he only hoped to fall in the first battle.

While all this was going on, Robert was ignorant of what was taking place. One day an old Richmond paper fell into his hands and the following paragraph met his eyes:

A DEEP MYSTERY

Agnes Somers, the lovely daughter of Judge Howard Somers of Staunton, has disappeared, and no trace of her can be found. It will be remembered that Miss Somers was in Richmond a short time ago, and created a sensation with her beauty. While here her engagement to Colonel Clyde Monroe, one of our most gallant officers, was announced. He is nearly distracted over her disappearance. Many theories have been advanced, but the one generally accepted is that she suddenly lost her reason, and wandered into the mountains. The sympathy of all is extended to the bereaved father and mother.

Robert rushed to his brother.

"Clayt, listen to this," he cried, reading the paragraph.

At the name of Agnes Somers, General Hunter

started but said nothing until Bob had finished. Then in a low tone remarked, "That is strange; what could have happened?"

"It's the work of that scoundrel, Kincaid," cried Bob. "Clayt, I am going to search for her and find her as I did Helen. Don't try to stop me. The mystery must be solved."

"I'd let you go in a moment if I thought it would be of any use, Bob. But listen to reason. When Helen was abducted you were at Monterey, only a few miles away. The country was in possession of our troops. Now it is different. There is not a single chance of your being successful. But there is something else in that paragraph that has escaped your notice. Does it not say she was engaged?"

Bob looked again and his countenance fell. "So it does. I was so excited over her being lost I did not notice. I am surprised."

"Why surprised, Bob?"

"Because — because — well, I have a reason. But, Clayt, engaged or not I am going to find her."

"What's the date of that paper?"

Bob looked, "Why it's nearly three weeks old," he cried.

"Then don't you see how idle it is for you to talk of going to search for her? She may be found by this time or she may be dead."

"Don't say dead, Clayt. If harm has come to her through Kincaid, I'll track him as I would a wolf and show no mercy."

"I think the man she's engaged to would do that without your help. I know I—" He stopped abruptly and turned away.

Bob heard him say as if to himself, "Engaged! Perhaps it is best."

He felt his brother was right in saying it would be of no use now for him to try to find Agnes. He could only wait for later news, hoping she was safe already.

CHAPTER XX

WHAT BEFELL AGNES

WHEN Agnes Somers left Hannah's cabin she felt a little afraid, for the night had grown quite dark. The cabins of the slaves were situated back of the lawn which was large and studded with trees. On her way to the cabin she had thought she saw a man standing in the shadow of one of the trees, but on looking closer could see nothing and concluded she was mistaken.

The path ran close to one of the largest trees, and as she was passing it she was suddenly seized and before she could cry out a hand was over her mouth and a gag thrust in. A scarf was wound tightly around her head, a rope passed around her body, and her arms bound closely to her sides. Then she was picked up like a child and carried away.

Agnes was so nearly suffocated that she hardly realized what was happening, but knew that from time to time she was changed from the arms of one to those of another of her captors. At last there was a stop, she heard the trampling of horses and a whispered consultation and felt herself lifted to the arms of one on a horse.

No word had been spoken to her, but now the man holding her said, "Miss Somers, that gag must be very uncomfortable. I will remove it on your prom-

ise not to cry out. The least sound and back it goes."

Agnes nodded her head and the gag was removed. What relief it was to take a full deep breath! The scarf was still kept about her head and she could see nothing; but she could soon tell by the roughness of the way, the sound of the wind in the trees, and the fact that they were traveling in single file that they were ascending a mountain trail.

All night they rode, halting at the break of day. Agnes was lifted down, her arms unbound and the scarf removed. She could now see that her captors were four. They were masked, yet she was sure she had never seen any of them before. All wore Confederate private uniforms.

They had stopped at a wild and beautiful spot. Around them rose the mountains and great rocks were everywhere. From underneath one of the rocks babbled a clear spring. In another place the rocks were piled so as to form a little grotto, and into this the men were carrying some blankets. Another blanket was hung at the entrance.

One man seemed to be the leader. He spoke as one accustomed to command, and the others obeyed without question. He now came and spoke to Agnes, assuring her that no harm would befall her; and that she was as safe as in her own home.

"Why this outrage then?" asked Agnes bitterly. "Why wear masks like robbers?"

"We do not wish you to know us should you ever see us again. Ask no more questions, for they will not be answered. Without doubt you are nearly dead from fatigue. Better bathe your face in the spring,

and we will have some breakfast. Then you can get a little rest. We will stay here until night. Again I assure you your privacy will not be disturbed, but there will be a guard outside."

Agnes bathed her face and throbbing temples in the cool water of the spring, then retired into the grotto to smooth her rumpled clothing. To her surprise she found that a comfortable retreat had been provided, with brush and comb. Soon the leader came to the entrance and announced breakfast was ready.

At first she thought she would refuse, then decided it would be well to keep up her strength.

An appetizing meal was set before her; there was even fragrant coffee; "captured from some Yank," the leader explained with a smile.

The meal finished, Agnes retired to her retreat and threw herself on the blankets with sobs. What could it mean? She could only think Colonel Kincaid had something to do with it, and shuddered at what might be before her. Those now with her treated her with respect, but what was beyond? At last tired nature claimed her own and she slept.

She was surprised when called and told it was near sundown. She found another good meal ready, and after it was over a horse with a side saddle was brought and the leader said, "Miss Somers, we have a long ride before us tonight. It was not only uncomfortable for the men who carried you last night, but it must have been humiliating to you. I have therefore provided this horse for you, but you must promise to make no outcry or ask any questions; in fact, never to speak unless you are spoken to."

Agnes readily promised as she thought she saw a chance for escape, but a strap was passed around her waist and fastened to the saddle behind. She rejoiced, however, to have the use of her hands and eyes.

The trail led along the crest of the mountain, and in the valleys below she frequently saw the gleam of camp fires. At last they left the mountain and took the main road. Here two men rode, one on each side of her, so in the darkness she could not be distinguished for a woman. The leader rode ahead.

The road was good, and they rode rapidly all night. When daylight came Agnes' eyes were again bound but she knew the horses had left the road and once more were ascending a mountain.

At last they stopped, the strap around Agnes was unfastened and she was told to dismount, but when attempting to do so she swayed and would have fallen if the leader had not caught her.

"We are brutes," he muttered. "The ride has about used her up. We should have stopped to rest. If anything serious comes of this we might as well make our wills."

Faint as she was Agnes caught the words, and they confirmed her opinion that Kincaid was back of her abduction.

The men had halted in front of a rough log cabin in a secluded part of the mountain. They led, almost carried, Agnes in, and she heard a negro woman say, "So yo' got the gal?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Now see that you take good care of her."

All went out and a whispered consultation was

held, then Agnes heard the men going away. A minute later the bandage was removed from her eyes and she found herself confronted by a stout negro woman who said, "Yo' must be tired, honey. Cum in heah and rest while I git yo' sumthin' to eat."

The cabin consisted of but two rooms, and Agnes was taken to the rear one.

"Where am I, and why was I brought here?" she asked.

The colored woman shook her head. "Ax no questions. Yo' can call me Dinah. I take good care of yo'."

She went out locking the door behind her.

The cabin was roughly built of large logs, and the room in which Agnes was had but one window which was heavily barred. Agnes was too tired to notice much then.

The woman brought some breakfast, and Agnes ate a little; then throwing herself on the bed she sobbed herself to sleep.

It was nearly night when she awoke. At first she was bewildered but soon all came back to her, and she knew she was a prisoner. She found the room was furnished with all things necessary for making her toilet. There was even a wardrobe full of clothing, all of good quality.

On examining the bars of the window she found they were made of gun barrels, and that the work had been done recently. Dinah refused to talk at all.

Here Agnes lived in almost absolute silence for nearly three weeks. She had no reason to complain of her treatment, for Dinah showed her every attention and the food was of the best.

She grew pale and thin from her confinement. If Colonel Kincaid was at the bottom of this, why did he not come?

Agnes was right in thinking Colonel Kincaid had her carried away. His plans had been carefully made. He was in command of the post near the cabin where Agnes had been taken. It was a very secluded spot, and there was little fear of discovery so he had fitted it up for her.

Dinah, the colored woman, had been caught stealing and would have been flogged if Colonel Kincaid had not forbidden it. In her gratitude she was his willing tool.

The men who abducted Agnes were members of Kincaid's regiment. The leader was a lieutenant called Jenkins. Some weeks before, these men had been involved in a drunken brawl with two soldiers of another regiment. In the melee these two soldiers were killed. It was dark when the fight took place, and only Colonel Kincaid knew who had done the killing. He resolved to protect the men thinking he might some time have use for them.

He gave the men to understand that as long as they did his bidding he would not inform on them, and instructed them in their abduction of Agnes. It has been seen how well they carried out these instructions.

To do Colonel Kincaid justice he had no intention of anything but making Agnes his lawful wife. He was madly in love with her, and determined to have her, come what would. His gross insult to her at the ball in Richmond was done on the impulse of the moment. He thought for a time his madness had spoiled all, and that he would be called to account,

but as time passed and he heard nothing, he knew Agnes had not told, and began plotting to gain possession of her.

His plan was to rescue Agnes from the cabin, telling her she had been abducted by a famous guerrilla chief. He was in hopes that out of gratitude she would agree to marry him. If not, he would marry her anyway. He knew a preacher who would be his willing tool, and his men would act as witnesses. He was prepared to throw away honor, fame, everything a man holds dear to gain possession of her.

Only two days after Lieutenant Jenkins and his men had departed on their mission, Colonel Kincaid received orders to take his regiment and join in the raid of Imboden and Jones. Deep were his curses, but he dared not disobey. He believed Agnes would be safe in the cabin until his return, so he wrote a letter to Lieutenant Jenkins so carefully worded that if it had fallen into the hands of others it would have been harmless.

The raid took longer than had been expected. Colonel Kincaid's regiment took an active part in it and he won honor, but never had he cared so little for it. Day and night his thoughts were with Agnes, and he was wondering whether his scheme had proven successful or not.

When Lieutenant Jenkins returned and found Colonel Kincaid gone he was worried, but on being given the letter he felt easier and waited for the colonel's return. It had been given out that Jenkins had been away on a secret mission and nothing was thought of it.

CHAPTER XXI

JIM HAS A SURPRISE

IT WAS little wonder Jim had been disgusted with his experiences as a sharpshooter at Fredericksburg. The battalion in which he was placed took no part in the great battle of the first day. When Burnside decided to withdraw his army across the river he knew he would have to hold his position for at least another day to get away without disaster.

During the night Jim's battalion was ordered to hold an extremely exposed position. This it was to do without firing unless the enemy advanced on it, as Burnside did not wish to bring on a battle. The only protection the men had was a little ridge of earth not over a foot high. Behind this they had to lie all day, hugging the ground, the balls missing them by but a few inches. As it was, many were killed and wounded.

[illegible] imagine what effect this would have on [illegible]'s temperament. All day he lay, the balls [illegible] earth above him and covering him with [illegible]. "Never before," he said in relating his experi[illegible] "did I wish I was no thicker than a knife's [illegible] I had to lie all day and take it. No [illegible] for me. Scoutin' is good enough." [illegible] decided to go back to Washington with [illegible] and stay with him until he recovered, [illegible] very discontented.

"Bob, I can't stand this any longer," he exclaimed. "I'm goin' back to the mountings. This is no place fer me. I hear Gineral Milroy is in command at Winchester, and Gineral Kelley in West Virginia. They be my two old commanders, and I'm goin' to them."

"Go, if you must, Jim. I hate to part with you. But we can get together again when my brother gets well."

"Jest yo' whistle and I'll be with yo'," said Jim.

"Jim Kidder, I am glad to see you," exclaimed Milroy when Jim reported. "I have often wished for you, as the rebs are giving me a good deal of trouble, and it's hard to get reliable news. I had two hundred men captured the other day, and it could have been avoided if my scouts had kept me posted. Where is Bob Jones?"

"He's with his brother, Gineral Hunter. The gineral was badly wounded at Fredericksburg."

"Oh! I remember. Bob Jones is really Bob Hunter. I hope General Hunter is recovering."

"Yes, he be gettin' on nicely."

Jim remained with Milroy for some days, and on three occasions saved some of the outposts from being surprised and captured.

Not only around Winchester but in West Virginia things were going badly. Ever since Fredericksburg, the Confederate cavalry had been exceedingly active, sweeping down and capturing outposts and wagon trains. So rapid were the movements of the enemy it was hard to tell where they would strike next.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which ran through the northern part of West Virginia and

Maryland was of the greatest importance to the government. This line was continually menaced by the Confederate cavalry raids.

It was not until the latter part of the war that the Federal cavalry became equal to and even superior to that of the Confederate cavalry.

About this time General Milroy received a letter from General Kelley saying he was fearful of a raid on the railroad. "I have so many places to guard," he wrote, "that with my small force I can only keep a weak garrison at each place, and it is easy for the enemy to combine and sweep down and capture some of these places, and get away before I can meet them. My only recourse is to keep myself as well posted as possible. If only I had my two young scouts, Jim Kidder and Bob Jones, I would feel more secure."

General Milroy showed the letter to Jim saying, "I guess General Kelley needs you more than I do, but I hate to give you up."

"Gineral, I know them mountings like a book, and I can do better work thar than here. I know who the Union men are, and I believe I can go right in among them pesky rebels. Yo' can pick up a heap of news jest by talkin' with the people you meet."

"That is so, Jim, and if you wish to go I will not keep you."

"Hello, Jim, you here!" cried General Kelley when Jim made his appearance. "Where did you come from, and where is your partner?"

"Bob be in Washington. Here be a letter from Gineral Milroy."

General Kelley read the letter and said, "So Milroy let you come. That was good of him, but he

knows how much depends on keeping the railroad open. I know something is up. My scouts report a general movement of the enemy. They think they are concentrating somewhere, but they can't find where. None of them bring me as reliable news as you used to bring me. Do you think you can find out what the enemy is up to?"

"I can try."

It did not take Jim long to prepare for the trail. As it was getting warm he traveled light. As he neared Beverly he learned the Union troops had been driven from that place, and it was now occupied by the enemy.

Three days after Jim had left General Kelley he stood on a mountain looking down into a valley through which a large body of cavalry was passing. "The varmints be goin' north," he exclaimed. "I reckon they be goin' fer the railroad. If they be, General Kelley will know it before I can get back, so I might as well go on."[1]

Jim had orders to go as far south as Huntersville if he could make it. He was preparing to move on when he heard voices and dropped behind a rock. Soon a line of Confederate soldiers appeared. They were in open formation and appeared to be scouring the mountain as if looking for someone. "Can it be that I have been seen?" thought Jim.

He soon learned that they were looking for deserters or those who had taken to the mountains to escape conscription. As they were coming in a long line they could not avoid running over him so he dodged

[1] This was the raid of Generals Imboden and Jones.

among the rocks hoping to escape unseen. One of the soldiers caught sight of him and yelled, "Halt!" Jim ran on and a ball whizzed past his head, then came a harmless volley. Jim was a swift runner, and soon distanced all but two of his pursuers. One of these he shot in the leg and the other stopped.

Toward evening of the next day Jim found himself on a mountain overlooking a camp of the enemy near Huntersville. As he was trying to get a better view he caught sight of a log cabin with smoke pouring from its chimney. It was situated in a very remote place, and there was no cultivated ground about it showing it was not the home of a mountaineer.

Jim decided to investigate, and he crept up in the rear of the house. There was but one window in this end, and it was heavily barred. "Queer place for a jail," he thought. "Must be something wrong here."

Unslinging his carbine Jim crept around the house. As he turned the corner he caught sight of two soldiers climbing the rugged path. One carried a basket, the other wore the uniform of a Confederate officer.

A colored woman met them near the house and the officer said, "Here's what you wanted, Dinah. How is the girl?"

"Mighty po'. She do be pinin' away. It am a shame to pen her up."

"Don't believe you will have to keep her much longer," said the officer.

The soldier set the basket down and began to walk around the house, suddenly coming face to face with Jim. The surprise was mutual. The soldier uttered

a yell and dodged back, but not soon enough to escape a ball from Jim's carbine which laid him low.

The officer sprang down the path, drawing his revolver and firing as he ran. The ball missed Jim and struck the negro woman in the heart and she fell without a moan. Jim fired at the officer but missed.

Without noticing the dead soldier or woman Jim entered the cabin, and called, "Who's here?"

There was no answer, but he heard frightened sobbing in the room beyond. There was an old-fashioned iron skillet on the hearth, and seizing it Jim broke the lock, and revolver in hand kicked open the door. He gave one look and the revolver dropped from his hand, for he was looking into the face of Agnes Somers. She was standing with her hand pressed to her heart looking with frightened eyes at the door.

A moment she stood so, then with a low cry threw herself into Jim's arms, and clinging to him sobbed and cried, "It's Jim! It's Jim!"

Jim soon came to himself. He knew they must move quickly. Gently unclasping her arms he said, "We must get away."

"Where is Bob?" asked Agnes.

"Bob's not heah. We must hurry. That officer got away, and will soon be back with a company of men."

Hurriedly Jim made a bundle of a few things he thought they would need most, strapped it like a knapsack, and said, "Come, they may be on us any time!"

Agnes shuddered when they passed the bodies of Dinah and the soldier, but Jim's whole thought was on getting away.

If Jim had only known it, there was no danger of pursuit. The lieutenant remembered when he recovered from his flight that he had seen but one man. If Agnes escaped, he trembled to think of meeting Kincaid. So he got the soldiers who had helped him abduct Agnes, and when darkness came they climbed the mountain to the cabin. They found the two bodies and an empty cabin.

The lieutenant thought rapidly, and hit upon a plan which he believed would hide everything and deceive Kincaid. The bodies were dragged into the cabin and it was fired. Then the lieutenant and his men hurried away. The fire was seen from the valley and commented on. In the morning an investigation was made, and in the ashes of the cabin the charred remains of two human beings were found. There was much discussion as to who they could have been. One soldier was missing, but he was reported as a deserter.

When on his return Colonel Kincaid was told the story he could hardly believe it. To think his plans had all turned out so well only to fail at the last was a bitter disappointment. However the evidence was too strong to be disputed. The lieutenant advanced two theories: that the cabin had accidentally caught fire and Agnes and Dinah perished in the flames; or that the deserting soldier had become infatuated with Agnes' beauty, gone to the cabin, committed a great crime, and killing both Dinah and Agnes to hide it, set fire to the cabin.

Kincaid had staked all to win Agnes and lost, but if lost to him so was she to everyone else. This thought gave him some comfort. His only fear was

that in some way his part in the abduction would become known; but the soldiers were the only living ones who knew, and he believed he could trust them to keep still for their own sakes.

Jim and Agnes had not gone more than a mile from the cabin when darkness fell. If Jim had been alone he would have gone on, but he knew it was useless to try to proceed with Agnes. So he turned aside and sought shelter at the base of a cliff, where overhanging rocks would conceal them and give them shelter in case of a storm.

Agnes did not like the thought of stopping so near the cabin but Jim said, "It's the best we can do. Yo' can't travel in the dark and they could hunt fer us a week and not find us here."

Jim climbed the rocks and looked down into the valley. The camp fires were burning brightly, and he could see no signs of any unusual commotion.

Jim had brought a blanket from the cabin, and with this and his rubber cape he made a bed for Agnes, and told her to get some sleep while he watched.

Jim thought of their situation with dread. Miles from help, surrounded by enemies, it would be bad enough if he were alone, but how could he escape with a tender girl?

As the night passed, Jim noticed a glow in the direction of the cabin, soon it became brighter, and he became convinced that the cabin was on fire. Towards morning a violent storm arose but they were well protected, and would not have minded it had it not been for the thunder and lightning which greatly alarmed Agnes.

Morning came, and as the storm continued they were compelled to remain in their retreat all day. Agnes told Jim all that had befallen her.

"So yo' think it was that whelp Kincaid who brought the trouble on yo'," cried Jim, "the same cuss who tried to git Bob hanged, but he will never cause any moah trouble, if I git sight of him. Don't worry, I will git yo' out of this suah. But I must now see what is goin' on below."

As far as Jim could see there had been no movement of the troops below and he said, "I don't believe them fellers that had yo' belonged to that company."

Once he left, saying he wished to do a little scouting. He made his way to where he had a view of where the cabin had stood. The ruins were still smouldering, but there was no sign of a living soul. He returned and told Agnes he was almost sure that no search was being made for them, and they would start as soon as the storm was over.

The next morning as soon as it was light they started. Their breakfast was a meager one, but Agnes made no complaint. Jim could see that the walking wearied her, and he was as considerate as possible, choosing the easiest way and resting frequently.

They did not make over ten miles that day, but that was a tremendous journey for Agnes. She lay down aching in every limb. They ate the last of their provisions, and Jim decided the only thing to do was to seek a house in the morning. They might be fortunate enough to strike a Union home; if not, only he would suffer. Agnes would be cared for. He would cheerfully have suffered death to save her.

The next morning the mountains seemed desolate, not a house was in sight. Agnes managed to get to her feet, but she staggered when she walked, and at last fell.

"Jim, you go on and leave me," she sobbed. "I'm not worth saving. You can save yourself without me to hinder. Leave me to die."

There came a look in Jim's face that stabbed her. It was as if she had thrust a knife in his heart.

"Jim," she cried, "forgive me! I did not mean that. If we must die, we'll die together, you noble-hearted boy. I'll try again."

With Jim's help she rose and went on, he half supporting her. Agnes seemed endowed with new strength, and while their progress was slow still they covered some ground. At last Jim gave a joyful cry, "Thar's a house. Do yo' see it?" He pointed down the mountain side.

Sure enough, about half-way down the mountain was a lonely cabin on a small level plateau. There was smoke rising from the chimney, and part of the ground was cultivated.

As they neared the clearing Agnes gave a sharp cry and sank to the ground. The blood was pouring from one of her shoes. They were light house shoes and had been badly worn and torn by the rocks. Now she had stepped on a sharp stone and it had cut her foot to the bone.

Jim was frightened. For him to touch that foot would have been sacrilege.

"Agnes, you stay here. I'll run for help," he cried, and was away.

A man was hoeing in the field, and a little girl sat

on a high stump watching him. When Jim burst from the woods she gave a shrill cry and jumped from the stump, running for the house. The man dropped his hoe, ran a short distance and picking up a gun made for the woods.

Jim was met at the door by a woman who stood as if she would bar his entrance and asked, "Who be yo'? What do yo' want?"

"My sister," said Jim. "She be badly hurt."

"Yo' sister," exclaimed the woman. "Whar be she?"

"Jest up the mounting at the edge of the clearin'. Come quick. She be bleedin' to death."

"Yo' be not foolin' me?" asked the woman.

"No! Come! We'uns be alone. Jest the two of us."

The woman whispered to the little girl, then went with Jim. When they reached Agnes all the woman's suspicion vanished. She waved her hand to the little girl, who ran and climbing on the stump called, "Daddy! Daddy! It's all right."

The man came, and with his assistance Agnes was carried to the house. The man and Jim went out in the yard while the woman cared for Agnes' foot.

She called Jim in a short time, saying the cut was a bad one, but she had it dressed now and would get them something to eat.

After eating Agnes dropped into a deep sleep, and the woman then turned on Jim with blazing eyes and cried, "Yo' lied. That gal be not yo' sister. Who be she?"

Jim told his whole story, and it was listened to with wonder. Jim added, "I know yo' folks be Union

or yo' wouldn't have run when I came. I'm a Union scout."

The man confessed and said he had been threatened by some of his neighbors, and had to be watchful. He added, "It's dangerous for the gal to be here. She's too pretty. Thar be lots of rough men 'round heah who care for nothin'."

It was decided Agnes should be changed into a mountain girl, so a decoction of walnut bark was made and her hair and skin stained so skillfully that no one could tell it. She was given a clumsy woolen dress, and the change was complete.

Agnes soon had reason to be thankful this was done for a gang of guerrillas soon visited the Tarbell home. Mr. Tarbell and Jim took to the woods. Mrs. Tarbell said Agnes was a cousin who was visiting her, and had hurt her foot.

Nearly a month passed and Agnes was still unable to travel when a regiment of Union cavalry came raiding through that section. The colonel of the regiment had heard of Jim, and told him General Kelley had given him up, thinking the rebels had got him at last.

It was decided that it was best for Agnes still to keep her disguise, and travel as Jim's sister. It would save many questions. The Union force had captured several horses in the raid, and both Agnes and Jim were given good mounts.

Jim learned with surprise that while he was in the mountains a great battle had been fought and lost.

General Kelley was agreeably surprised when Jim reported. "I thought you were a goner sure," he said. "That raid came, and it was a fierce one. I

have not had the railroad repaired yet. Let's hear your story."

Jim told him and the general said, "So you rescued a pretty girl? What's her name?"

"Agnes Somers. She is traveling as my sister. It saves unpleasant questions."

"Agnes Somers! I know a Judge Howard Somers of Winchester. Is she his daughter?"

"The same. Since the war Judge Somers has spent most of his time on his plantation near Staunton," answered Jim.

"I know the judge," replied the general. "I once argued a case before him. It will be a pleasure to restore his daughter to him."

It was decided that Jim and Agnes should be escorted across the mountains to Winchester, Agnes still traveling as Jim's sister.

CHAPTER XXII

CHANCELLORSVILLE

"GOOD news, Robert," said General Hunter to Bob one morning.

"What is it?"

"I am to return to my command next week."

"Glad to hear it. I'm sick of lying around Washington, though it's a favorite place for a lot of officers who would rather not fight. I have news, too, General Hooker is about to move."

"Then I'll be in time to take part. This is good news."

"Clayt, I'm thinking of going to Winchester, but now I'll stay here until we see what this movement amounts to. I hope it won't be another Fredericksburg. You'll let me act as your orderly again, won't you?"

"I suppose I'll have to, but I hate to have you going into danger."

"No more than I hate to have you. In fact you need a guardian. You seem to be a favorite target for the enemy. It would have been all over with you if I had not been with you at Fredericksburg."

"To say the least, you saved me from being captured, so I'll have to let you go along. I don't believe we'll have another Fredericksburg. I have great confidence in Hooker."

When Hooker took command of the Army of the

Potomac he found a dispirited and demoralized army. Men were deserting by the hundreds. He went to work and reorganized the army, infused spirit into it, and by the last of April was ready to make an aggressive movement. This he did, forcing a passage across the Rappahannock and then the Rapidan.

Hooker's army numbered 130,000, that of Lee a little over half that number. Hooker did not make the mistake that McClellan was always making of over estimating the Confederate numbers. Hooker believed that success was in his grasp, his men had confidence in him, and he had confidence in himself.

He had planned his campaign well, and at first General Lee was completely outgeneraled, but as soon as he became aware of what Hooker was doing, he made preparations with his usual celerity to meet the coming storm.

The first real clash between the two armies took place at Chancellorsville, not much more than a farm-house situated in a wood of tangled thickets. Only a small part of Hooker's army was engaged and they found Lee's army so well entrenched, that Hooker decided to draw that portion of his army back into an entrenched position he had prepared, and there await the attack of Lee, which he felt assured would come.

The next morning was ushered in by the thunder of cannon and rattle of small arms, but it was only on the left and center that the battle raged, and as time passed it proved to be a noisy battle rather than a bloody one. Time and again Lee gave every indication that he intended to attack in force, but the attack never came.

All this time the right of Hooker's army, consisting of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps, lay unmolested, resting in apparent security.

Along in the day a cloud of dust was seen rising above the tree tops and moving to the right. Then came reports that large bodies of troops were moving in the same direction. Through an opening in the forest, glimpses of large bodies of moving men could be seen. So large was the army that it took three hours for it to pass this point. A brigade was sent out and attacked the rear of this column and succeeded in capturing a Georgia regiment. The prisoners reported that they belonged to Jackson's corps.

All these things were reported to Hooker, to Howard, and to Deven, who commanded the right division.

It was thought by many that the enemy was retreating. Indeed, so strong was this belief that a division of the Twelfth Corps was sent in front to intercept the retreat. No worse thing could have been done for these troops were absent when the rush came, and when they attempted to return they found their works occupied by the enemy, and they were caught in the backward rush and became a part of the panic-stricken army.

There were many officers who did not think it a retreat. They claimed Jackson was making one of his famous flank movements and gathered in groups to discuss the situation. Word of their fears was carried to Hooker and Howard, but nothing was done.

General Hunter was very much worried. He was not where he could see anything of the moving troops,

but he could see the cloud of dust always moving to the right. He had no trouble in repulsing the attacks on his brigade. "They are not real attacks at all," he said. "Lee is simply playing with us. Something is going to happen."

Bob was wild. "Are our generals fools?" he cried. "Can't they see that that is no retreat? Jackson will be in the rear of our right before night."

At last Bob could stand it no longer. "Clayt, I'm going to ride over to the right," he said. "I want to see what's going on."

Six o'clock came. Howard was back in his headquarters taking it easy. Schurz was with him. The soldiers had their arms stacked. There was no thought of danger.

Suddenly like a thunderbolt on a clear day Jackson's hosts in battle array burst from the woods. On their flank and in the rear they came in a solid line. No skirmishers were in front, but like a great avalanche bearing everything before it, the enemy came in solid ranks. The frightened Federals sprang for their guns. There were hoarse commands but no one heeded. Some of the soldiers fired once, some twice, some not at all, then all fled in terror.

To the left, regiments tried to form but the fugitives rushed through them, breaking their ranks and sweeping them back. Some regiments made a brave stand, only to be attacked in flank and rear. Soon the whole Eleventh Corps was in wild retreat, crazed with fear, thinking only of safety.

Then the Twelfth Corps was caught, and despite resistance, its regiments on the right were scattered and joined in the flight. The scene was indescribable.

Twenty thousand men in full flight, senses gone, pride gone; everything gone except the desire to get away. Hundreds were taken prisoners.

It was on this scene that Bob came. He saw the forces of Jackson burst from the woods, and was caught in the rush. Men were borne back in that stream like straws.

Think of twenty thousand men crazed with fear rushing like stampeded cattle over any obstacle that opposed them! Into this frightened mass shot and shell were falling. Jackson's men were like eager wolves behind them.

"It is worse than Bull Run," moaned Bob.

On swept Jackson's men as crazed with success as Howard's men were with fear. On they came until they were within half a mile of Hooker's headquarters. It looked as if everything was lost.

The division in which General Hunter's brigade was, was defending the line in front of the Chancellorsville House. Now Lee sprang on them in earnest, but his men met hearts as brave as their own, and were driven back.

Where were the men to stay the mad rush of Jackson?

General Pleasonton saw the danger, but he had only a handful of cavalry with him. There were no infantry at hand. If only he had cannon, but it would take time to bring them into action. If Jackson could be stopped for a few brief minutes, the cannon could be brought.

A battalion of the Eighth Pennsylvania cavalry was near-by — four small companies. "Major Keenan, charge that advancing host," cried Pleasonton.

Major Keenan knew what that order meant. He and his men were to be sacrificed that time might be gained to get the cannon. This charge might save the army, but it meant death for him and his men.

Without hesitation, with no change of countenance, Major Keenan raised himself in his stirrups and his voice rang out, "Battalion, attention! Forward! Trot!" Then as they neared the enemy like a bugle's blast came the order, "Charge!"

With flashing sabers and wild cheers those four small companies charged into the face of Jackson's thousands.

Jackson's men had become disorganized in their mad rush, and the taking of so many prisoners, and now their front was more like a mass of disorganized men pressing forward. Astonished they saw the little handful of cavalry charging down upon them, rushing in among them, cutting, slashing. The mad rush of Jackson's men was halted; but of the cavalry who charged, few came back. Among the dead was the gallant Major Keenan.[1]

Time had been gained for the cannon to be placed in position, and twenty-two guns opened their mouths. Jackson's men were whirled back. Night also came.

Now it seemed that Fate had decreed that Jackson was to end his life with his most glorious day. While reorganizing and establishing his lines in the dark, he rode too far to the front, was mistaken by his own

[1] Can any American boy read of this charge without feeling the red blood leaping through his veins? Is it not as worthy of a poet's pen as the "Charge of the Light Brigade"?

men for the enemy and fired upon. Three bullets struck him, and one of his arms had to be amputated. For eight days he lingered, then passed away. Thus perished one of the greatest, if not the greatest general produced by the Confederacy.[1]

During the night some degree of order was restored to the routed corps. In the morning Lee hurled his columns against Sickles' corps that was defending the line in front of the Chancellorsville House. In the midst of the furious fight was the brigade of General Hunter. Like a rock stood the brigade but ammunition was being exhausted; part of the corps was giving way. Loudly Sickles called for reinforcements, none came. No answer even was returned. The Army of the Potomac had no commander.

General Hooker was leaning against a pillar of the Chancellorsville House when a cannon ball struck it and knocked the general insensible. He remained so for several hours.

Strange as it may seem not a general was willing to take supreme command. Hooker might recover consciousness at any time and they did not know how he would take it. So for hours the army was without a head.

Not being reinforced, Sickles had to surrender his position and fall back.

"This ends it," groaned General Hunter. "We are giving up the key to the battle field. There is

[1] It is said that Jackson's last words were, "Let us cross over the river and lie down in the shade."

Was he thinking of leading his army over a river to some new victory, or was he thinking of the river called Death he was so soon to cross? If so, he was to lie down in the shade of the trees of the river of Eternal Life.

now nothing for us to do but get back across the river."

So it proved. The next day General Hooker gave orders to retreat and the Army of the Potomac was again back in its old quarters. They had returned with defeat written on their banners, their bright hopes dashed to the earth. But they were still an unbroken, defiant army ready to meet the foe.[1]

[1] If Grant or Thomas or Sherman had been in command of the Army of the Potomac there would have been no retreat across the river either at Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. The fact is, Grant's army was as badly beaten during the first day's fight in the Wilderness as was either Burnside or Hooker.

Hooker had two corps that had hardly been touched by the battle, yet the rout of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps took all the heart out of him.

The stampede of the Eleventh Corps brought it into derision. So unmercifully was it derided by the rest of the army and by the press throughout the North that the whole corps became disheartened, and asked to be transferred to the west.

That the stampede was greater than it should have been there is no doubt, but the list of killed and wounded in the two corps shows that they did fight, and under terrible disadvantage.

It is on the generals of the army that the blame should be laid. Never was an army surprised before in broad daylight when it had had as many warnings as to what was going on. On Generals Hooker, Howard, and Devin should rest the blame; especially on Howard. The brave deeds that he did before and after cannot remove from him the infamy of the surprise at Chancellorsville.

It has been well said that any general can be defeated, but it is a crime for any general to be surprised.

General Lee reported that there were 20,000 United States rifles picked up on the field of battle. This showed that thousands of soldiers threw away their arms in their wild flight.

The loss of the Federal army in the battle was 17,287; that of the Confederate army between 13,000 and 14,000.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CAPTURE OF WINCHESTER

HOOKER'S defeat at Chancellorsville was a terrible blow to the North, and especially to the government at Washington. To President Lincoln it was crushing. He had believed that in Hooker he had at last found a general who would lead the Army of the Potomac to victory. Hooker was known to be a fighter.

To no one was the disappointment greater than to Bob, who took it much to heart.

"Cheer up, Bob," said his brother. "The army yet remains. We'll try it again."

"I know, but so many defeats are discouraging. What do you suppose will be done next?"

"We'll wait awhile and see what Lee is going to do, I suppose."

"I know what I am going to do."

"What's that?"

"I'm going to Winchester. Things are lively in the valley. Then I want to look up Jim. Haven't heard a word from him in a month, and nothing as to Agnes. I can never rest until I find out about her. I wonder if she's been found yet."

"I don't mind telling you, Bob, that I've had inquiries made under a flag of truce, and not a thing has been discovered."

His brother's interest in Agnes and not saying anything to him about it made Bob wonder.

"You have no objections to my going to Winchester?" he asked.

"None. If you hear of anything let me know. I am under the opinion we will all be moving north again. I believe Lee is contemplating an invasion of Pennsylvania. To carry the war into northern territory has always been a dream of the Confederates. Lee will never find a better time than now."

"Then the quicker I get to Winchester the better, for there will be things doing there."

Bob started the next day, going by way of Harper's Ferry. He reached Winchester without trouble, where he reported to General Milroy.

"Bob, I'm glad to see you," exclaimed the general. "I have need of you."

"Where is Jim?" was Bob's first question.

"I am afraid you'll never see Jim again," replied the general, telling how General Kelley had not heard from him in a month and it was thought he had fallen into the enemy's hands.

Jim taken! Bob could hardly believe it. "I can't give him up," he cried. "I must find out what has become of him."

"You can do Jim no good now," replied Milroy, "but you can do a great deal of good here. The rebels are thick as flies around here, and I cannot find out what they are doing. We have skirmishes every day. I have orders to hold myself in readiness to evacuate Winchester, and may receive such orders any time. I have not been able to discover anything but cavalry in front."

"My brother has an idea that Lee will attempt an invasion of Pennsylvania."

"That's what I am trying to find out, but my scouts report no infantry in the valley. Tomorrow I'm going to make a reconnoissance towards Strasburg with a strong force. I wish you to go with them."

The force started in the morning with Bob as scout. Some twelve or fifteen miles out the enemy was met, and quite a severe battle took place in which the Confederates were put to flight. As far as could be learned there was no infantry near, and the force returned to Winchester.

Bob did not return with them. He was determined to find out more, so leaving his horse he ascended a mountain thinking he might be able to discover whether the enemy was in force in the valley or not.

He picked out a good camping place, but when he awoke in the morning discovered that during the night the enemy had advanced and there was a large force between him and Winchester.

While debating what to do Bob discovered a Confederate soldier skulking among the rocks. Creeping up on him he ordered him to surrender.

The fellow seemed surprised and terribly frightened, and Bob saw he was unarmed.

"Who be yo'un?" he asked in a trembling voice.

"I'm a Yankee scout, so make no fuss and tell me what you know."

The fellow's face brightened. "Yo' be a Yank! I'm tryin' to get to the Yanks. I'm tired of fightin'."

"Oh! so you are deserting. Then you are willing to tell all you know."

After listening to his story Bob said, "You must tell that to Milroy. That is if there is any way we can get back."

They began working their way along the top of the mountain, but soon came to where they would have to descend into the valley. Fortune here favored them. Milroy had sent out another strong force, and this force met the advancing Confederates and drove them back for some distance.

Bob and the soldier started to join the Federals, but before they reached them were driven back, and in order to reach them would have to cross an open field between the two forces.

"Run as you never ran before," said Bob. "It's our only chance."

Away they went, the balls spattering around them, but they reached the Union lines in safety. By this time the advance had been checked and the Union troops continued their retreat without further molestations.

Bob lost no time in taking the deserter to Milroy.

He told the general that the whole of Ewell's corps was near and would be there by the next day.

"And the rest of Lee's army?" asked the general.

"Don't know, but suppose they will be right behind Ewell," answered the Confederate.

Milroy should have evacuated Winchester that night, but he was under the orders of General Schenck, and that general had sent no order to evacuate, only for him to hold himself in readiness.[1]

Milroy did not know what to do. If the deserter

[1] General Schenck sent such an order, but the telegraph line had been cut and General Milroy never received it.

had told the truth, Hooker must be close behind Lee. The general believed he could hold Winchester against all of Lee's army for two days.

The next day, Friday, Ewell came up and began carefully to feel of the fortifications. The following day passed with desultory fighting. There was yet time for Milroy to go, the way was open, but Sunday came and he was still in Winchester.

Then there came riding in from the north a little cavalcade, the sight of which caused Bob's heart to jump, for at the head rode Jim Kidder and Agnes Somers. Bob saw only Jim. He did not recognize Agnes in her strange mountain garb and dark complexion.

"Jim! Jim!" cried Bob, and the boys were in each other's arms.

"Don't you know Agnes?" asked Jim as soon as he could release himself from the clasp of Bob's arms.

Bob stared at the strange girl. "Agnes! It is Agnes!" he cried. "Thank God you are safe!"

There was no time for explanations, as great cannon were roaring. Ewell was bombarding the fort. Bob was acting as an orderly for Milroy, and a summons came for him. Jim escorted Agnes safely to her own home, and then joined Bob.

That day Ewell moved around the city and threw a force in the rear. Milroy had heard nothing from Hooker so he held a consultation, and it was resolved that he try and cut his way out.

That night the Union forces were quietly withdrawn from the fortifications and marching around the city, so none of the inhabitants would know what

was going on, they began their retreat. Four miles out they ran into the force Ewell had thrown in the rear, and in the darkness a battle took place, the only light being the flashes of the guns.

At first the Union troops were forced back. "We must get through," was the cry, and the advance threw themselves with fury on the Confederate line.

Among the foremost were Bob and Jim. Jim had had no time to tell Bob of what had happened. All he had said was that he had found Agnes in the mountains. Right into the Confederate ranks the boys spurred their horses. Other brave men were with them. There were shrieks and groans, the flashes of guns and saber strokes. The way was open. When Bob was through he thrust his smoking revolver in his holster and called to Jim, but there was no Jim.

"How did we get separated?" wondered Bob, his heart full of misgivings. When he reached Harper's Ferry he made a careful search, but still no Jim could be found. He had either fallen or been taken prisoner. In that night battle nearly one-half of Milroy's force had been captured.

Sick at heart Bob concluded to return to his brother, but Hooker's army was still in the rear. In the race for Pennsylvania Lee had a big start.[1]

[1] General Milroy was arrested and a court of inquiry was held to ascertain the reason he held Winchester so long. He had an army of nearly 9,000, and in the retreat nearly half were taken prisoners. The court exonerated him of all blame considering the conflicting orders under which he acted. Milroy's friends claimed that even if he did lose half his force it was a sacrifice well worth while, for the holding of Winchester by Milroy held Lee back for at least two days, and those two days were of untold advantage to the Union army.

CHAPTER XXIV

A NOBLE RESOLVE

THE night engagement told General Ewell that he would not have to storm Winchester to capture it, and sure enough the next morning he found the place evacuated. He was disappointed, for he expected to capture the entire garrison, but he was consoled by the thought that over four thousand prisoners had fallen into his hands.

Proudly the Confederates entered the city with flags waving and music playing.

General Clayton's division was the first to enter. Many of his soldiers lived in or around Winchester, and they made the city ring with their cheers, while around them swarmed wives, sisters, and sweethearts. It was a regular homecoming, but only a coming to say good-bye for their faces were set towards the north.

As General Clayton approached his residence he saw it was profusely decorated and a large number of his friends and neighbors had gathered to welcome him. Winchester was very proud of General Clayton.

While his wife and daughter were absent from Winchester, General Clayton had taken the precaution to have a family live in his house, so he found the place had not been molested.

Mr. Somers had taken the same precaution with his place, therefore Agnes was right at home. She lost no time in changing her mountain apparel for one more becoming, and now stood on the porch waving her handkerchief at the passing soldiers and wondering if Colonel Clayton's division would be among them, for in that division was the regiment of Colonel Monroe. But Colonel Monroe had been made a general for gallant conduct at Chancellorsville, which, of course, Agnes did not know. The things she had passed through had almost driven thoughts of her engagement from her mind, but now it was with her again, and she watched for him with eager eyes.

Agnes caught sight of General Clayton riding down the street, and crying his name flew at him with open arms.

He looked at her in astonishment, asking, "Young lady, what is it you wish?"

"I want to kiss you. Don't you know me?"

The general was off his horse in a moment, and had her in his arms, saying, "Agnes, can this indeed be you? How rejoiced your parents will be."

"Tell me of them — poor father and mother, they must have suffered more than I. Are they well?"

"They have suffered, Agnes, more than tongue can tell. They mourn you as dead, and yet the thought that you might be living has been more bitter than if you were dead. What happened to you? Why this darkened skin and hair?"

"Come into the house and I will tell you about it."

Speaking to an officer, General Clayton went with Agnes while the column moved on.

"Strange!" he exclaimed at the close of her story. "The whole thing is shrouded in mystery. It must be thoroughly investigated, but that will be impossible until this campaign is over. But no harm was done you, child, no indignities offered you?"

"None at all, General. The men who captured me were exceedingly polite, and as for Jim Kidder, no one could have a more devoted slave."

"So Robert's friend, Jim Kidder, rescued you; are you sure Robert had nothing to do with the business?"

"How could he, General? He was in Washington. I saw him a moment yesterday. He was acting as an orderly for General Milroy, and he was as rejoiced to see me as you are."

"That old scoundrel, Milroy!" exclaimed the general. "It is a pity he escaped. But, Agnes, if Robert had nothing to do with it, who did?"

"General, if you will promise not to do a thing until you are certain I will tell you my suspicions. Above all you must say nothing to father or Colonel Monroe for they might act rashly, and I may be mistaken and accuse a man falsely. I haven't a scrap of evidence against the man I suspect, Colonel Kincaid."

"Colonel Kincaid! Why do you think it was he? It is indeed a serious thing to accuse an officer of his standing."

"From many things that happened before my abduction, of which I will not speak, and also from what happened afterwards. My idea is that the soldiers who captured me were tools of Kincaid. Before they returned with me he was ordered on that

raid, and before his return Jim found and released me."

"There is logic in your reasoning, but nothing can be done now. I must be in Martinsburg by morning. Colonel Monroe is a general now, Agnes. His brigade will not come through this city, it is marching on a road several miles east. I will see him and tell him. Your disappearance nearly killed him. It is said he actually tried to throw his life away at Chancellorsville."

"Wait a moment, I'll write a short note to him."

She ran to the desk and wrote:

MY DEAR GENERAL:

I am safe. Arrived in Winchester just before it was captured. I have so much to tell you, but will refrain until I see you. General Clayton tells me you are a general. How proud I am of you. May God protect you and bring you safely back to me. I shall pray for you daily. Oh! how I have wanted you in all my troubles. Your loving,

AGNES.

If Agnes had known all, she would not have written just as she did. When Colonel Monroe gave up his search for her and returned to his regiment he was a sad, heart-broken man. We have heard how in the battle of Chancellorsville he flung himself in danger as if not caring for life. In his search for Agnes he had learned many things which cut his sensitive heart to the quick.

There were plenty of wagging tongues ready to talk, and all sorts of stories were afloat. There were many who believed she had eloped with Colonel

Kincaid; others thought, with Robert Hunter. Colonel Monroe learned for the first time of her apparent affection for Robert, and that her father had favored Colonel Kincaid's suit almost to the point of forcing her to marry him.

He bitterly regretted that he had allowed Agnes to dance with Colonel Kincaid. He remembered how he had found her on the porch with Captain Evart, almost fainting, and Kincaid gone. What had happened? He would find Captain Evart and question him.

To his surprise, the captain said she was in the conservatory when he found her, not the ballroom.

"Was she alone?" asked Colonel Monroe.

"Yes, but I saw her enter the conservatory with Colonel Kincaid after the dance."

Captain Evart could have bitten his tongue out for saying this, for the face of the colonel turned pale with passion, so he hastily added, "Colonel Kincaid must have passed through the conservatory without stopping for it was not more than a minute afterwards that I entered to gather a bouquet for Miss Dumont, with whom I had been dancing. Her flowers had fallen to the floor and been trampled on, and I did not think the governor would mind my picking a few blossoms."

"You say not more than a minute had elapsed since Miss Somers and Colonel Kincaid had entered the conservatory, yet you found the colonel gone and Miss Somers in a fainting condition."

"Not over a minute. The time was very short."

"Thank you, captain. Please say nothing of my inquiries."

"You can rely on my discretion."

The general bowed and turned away. Evart looked after him with troubled eyes. "Now I've done it," he thought. "There's going to be trouble between those two men. Confound it! Why didn't I keep still?"

General Monroe left the captain with a storm raging in his heart. He believed only one of two things could have happened: Colonel Kincaid had insulted Agnes and left swiftly, or she had relented towards him and an elopement had been planned to be arranged for afterwards. If the first supposition was true, it could be settled only by an affair of honor; if the second, he could only grind his teeth in rage to think he had been so deceived. The seeds of jealousy had been sown in his heart and they began to sprout and grow.

As time went by and nothing was heard of Agnes, he began to think that the opinion that she had suddenly been bereft of her senses and wandered into the mountains and perished might be true.

It was at Martinsburg that General Clayton first had an opportunity of meeting General Monroe, telling him Agnes was safe in Winchester and handing him her note. General Monroe was astonished at the news, and tore the note open with trembling hands. He read it with perplexed brow. "This tells me little," he said to General Clayton. "It leaves all in the dark. Do you know more?"

"Yes, she told me all. Come to my quarters this evening and I will tell you. It is a remarkable story, and full of mystery."

General Monroe heard the story with varied emo-

tions. Jealousy whispered that it was not true; love, that it was.

"Then Agnes has no idea as to who abducted her?"

"None whatever," answered Colonel Clayton.

"I must see her and learn more," said Monroe, "but I will send her a note." With a short good-night, he went his way with bowed head and lagging step.

"I believe he thinks something is wrong," muttered General Clayton, looking after him. "He did not show the joy I expected."

The following day General Monroe sent Agnes the following letter:

MY DEAR PROMISED WIFE:

You can not imagine the joy I felt when I learned you were safe, but your note was so short and told so little that I would be entirely in the dark if General Clayton had not told me what you told him. Even that does not clear up the mystery.

Your story, dear Agnes, is astonishing, and if it did not come from you, I would say in some places so incredible that it is hard to believe. That you should be carried away, kept in confinement for three weeks, and not have the slightest idea who your captor was is very strange.

I have heard some things, Agnes, which tore my heart, and which need an explanation.

That you, although inside the Confederate lines, should be rescued by Jim Kidder, a Union spy and scout, and the companion of Robert Hunter (of your interest in him I have been informed), is exceedingly strange.

I have heard how you met Robert Hunter in secret when you knew he was a spy and that you parted from

Colonel Kincaid in the conservatory, not the ballroom. What happened there that you were found in a fainting condition?

All these things, Agnes, need an explanation. As your promised husband I have a right to ask. I love you, Agnes, and it would be like giving up life itself to give you up.

The thought that you traveled as Jim Kidder's sister is to me a horrible one. I shudder when I think of what might have happened.

Agnes, can you not make all these things clear? I shall be in torment until you do. I still have faith that you can. God only knows what I have suffered in the last month. Do not let me suffer longer. And when you have made all clear do not put off the wedding. I cannot rest easy until I am your husband and protector.

Agnes, I go to battle, but I believe your prayers will be my shield and buckler. I think only of you. You are in my thoughts day and night. If I win glory it will be only for you. I long to see you.

Your adoring lover,

CLYDE MONROE.

Agnes read the letter and hot tears sprang to her eyes. "He doubts me!" she cried, tearing her engagement ring from her finger and throwing it from her. Then, throwing herself on her bed, she sobbed hysterically. At length she grew quiet and lay for a time thinking. Then, rising with a different expression on her face, she picked up the ring and replaced it on her finger.

"I am wrong," she thought. "He should receive a full explanation. It is his due. I could not honor him as my husband if he had not asked for one. There are things that must look very dark to him.

My honor is at stake. I will tell him everything. It may mean a duel, but I will pray that he may live."

She sat down and wrote:

DEAR CLYDE:

Your letter has come to me and you shall have what you wish, a full explanation of everything. It is your due. I could not love you if you had not asked it. When every doubt is removed, when you can take me to your heart every cloud gone, then I will grant your last request, a speedy marriage.

Your own loving,

AGNES.

She gave the letter to the first courier leaving for the north, and it was delivered to General Monroe the day before the cannon began to roar at Gettysburg. Again and again he read it, and again and again he pressed it to his lips. Then he placed it in his bosom to carry with him into battle. "For her," he cried, "will I win glory!"

CHAPTER XXV

GETTYSBURG

WHEN Bob with the remnant of Milroy's army sought safety in Harper's Ferry, he found Hooker still undecided as to what Lee's course would be. There had been severe cavalry fighting, but the Blue Ridge still lay between the two great armies and hid what movements were being made.

The uncertainty of Jim's fate was a constant grief to Bob. "Everything goes wrong," he thought. "I believe I will join Clayt. A great battle must be fought soon and I want to be with him."

Bob found many changes had been made. General Hunter now commanded a division in Hancock's corps.

"So you were in the mixup at Winchester, were you?" asked the general.

"Yes, and a bad mixup it was. Milroy held on too long. If he had evacuated one day sooner he could have saved his entire army; now half of it is gone. And, Clayt, Jim is missing. I don't know whether he was killed or captured. I have one piece of good news though. Agnes Somers is safe. Jim found her in the mountains imprisoned in an old cabin and rescued her."

General Hunter seemed greatly interested, but Bob could tell him nothing further. There was little

time for speculation, however, as the whole army was on the move. Lee had now unveiled his plans. He was invading Pennsylvania.

The long talked of invasion had come at last. Pennsylvania was frightened. It had reasons to be. But not only was Pennsylvania excited, but New Jersey and New York. Thousands of militia were called out, but all the militia in the North would have been futile before Lee's veteran army of 80,000 men. The safety of the country rested on the Army of the Potomac — the army that had been defeated so often. Could it be victorious in the face of all these defeats? Could it stand before what was considered as Lee's invincible army?

"I believe we can," said General Hunter. "I can answer for this division, and I know Hancock can answer for the corps. He is a fighter."

Lee had a long start of Hooker. He was already in Pennsylvania and had captured Chambersburg, Carlisle, and York, and was threatening Harrisburg. Even Philadelphia was trembling for her safety. Hooker's army was now in full pursuit.

With the consent of General Hunter, Bob had been detailed as scout by General Hancock, and was now acting under his orders.

As the army was entering Frederick, Bob came riding up to his brother greatly excited, "Clayt, have you heard the news?" he cried.

"No, what is it? Has Lee captured Harrisburg? I am prepared to hear anything."

"Hooker has resigned."

"What? Resigned in the face of the enemy?"

"Yes, I just heard of it at Hancock's head-

quarters. General Meade has been appointed in his place."

"What can it mean? I am glad it's Meade though."

"It means that Hooker and Halleck have had a quarrel. Hooker wanted to take the Third Corps, and, with the garrison at Harper's Ferry, attack the communications of Lee."

"It was the right move to make," said the general.

"Well, Halleck vetoed it. That old mossback never learns. He is always putting his finger in and making a mess. Hooker wouldn't stand it, said if he couldn't command the army he would quit, and quit he did."

"I don't know as I blame him. It seems as if the loss of Harper's Ferry with 12,000 men during the Antietam campaign through his orders would have taught Halleck a lesson; but, as you say, he never learns."

The Union army was now rushing north with all speed, and both armies were groping in the dark. Neither knew exactly where the other was. Lee knew, however, that the Union army was after him, and not wishing to fight a battle so far from his base, turned his army back with orders to concentrate at Gettysburg, but with no idea of fighting a battle there.

On the other hand, General Meade thought of meeting the enemy along Pipe Stone Creek. He had no thought of Gettysburg as the place to fight the battle. Thus the meeting of the two armies at Gettysburg was entirely accidental. There was no time to plan. It was like two men meeting unex-

pectedly in the woods, and engaging in a death struggle.

On the morning of July first the Federal First Corps, which was encamped five or six miles from Gettysburg, marched for that place, reaching it between nine and ten o'clock. The advance had passed through Gettysburg and was near what was known as Seminary Ridge. Suddenly a rifle-shot rang out. A trooper of the Eighth Illinois had discovered the enemy in front and fired. That shot opened the battle of Gettysburg.[1]

On the morning of July first, Bob left the headquarters of General Hancock to see if he could discover the whereabouts of Lee. He scouted alone, for he believed he would attract less attention than would a greater number. He was also in a friendly country and there was no danger of capture except from the enemy. He kept to the right of Gettysburg, striking

[1] Here between the First Corps and General A. P. Hill's corps was fought one of the most fiercely contested battles of the war. Hill's corps outnumbered the first more than two to one, but for four hours the First Corps held Hill at bay, then the Eleventh Corps came to its aid. Hill had also been reinforced by Ewell's corps, and at 4:30 the Federals were forced to retreat back to Cemetery Ridge.

The losses in this battle were fearful. The fight between what was known as the Iron Brigade and Pettigrew's brigade of North Carolinians is historic. For two hours these two brigades lay at close range pouring volleys almost into each other's faces. The Second Wisconsin came out with sixty-nine men out of the 300 who went in. The loss of the Twenty-fourth Michigan was about as great. Other brigades in the corps lost as heavily, many of the regiments coming out with less than 100 men.

The Confederates suffered equally. The Twenty-sixth North Carolina, a large regiment, had 600 killed and wounded.

the main road leading to Carlisle about four or five miles from Gettysburg.

Gaining a hill, Bob had a view of the road some distance ahead, and about a mile away he saw a squad of horsemen approaching. Wheeling his horse he rode back a short ways to a farmhouse, before which was standing a gray-haired man. Bob spoke hurriedly, "Soldiers are coming. I think they are part of Lee's army. I will ride back of your house and hide in that grove. Some of the soldiers may stop. If they do, find out all you can and to what command they belong, then come and tell me."

Bob rode into the grove and hastily concealed his horse, then waited. The sound of the cannon at Gettysburg was growing louder. In a short time he saw a little girl coming towards him. "Daddy is afraid to come," she said. "The house is full of soldiers. He told me to tell you that the men say they belong to Ewell's corps, that they are Jackson's men and they say they intend to serve the Yankees the same way at Gettysburg that they did at Chancellorsville."

"Thank you," said Bob. "Is there any way I can get through the fields and woods to another road?"

She said there was another road about a mile away, a poor one, but leading to Gettysburg. He would have to let down a lot of fences which he must put up again.

Bob did not wait to hear more, and it is recorded that he did not put up the fences he took down. The road led into Gettysburg on the opposite side of where the battle was taking place, and near Ceme-

tery Hill. To all appearances the First Corps was holding its own, hundreds of prisoners had been sent back, one brigade had been captured almost entire. Bob did not tarry. He had to reach Hancock ten or twelve miles away. There was not a moment to lose.

On his way he met the Eleventh Corps hurrying to the aid of the First. They were marching with firm steps and eager faces. There was not a straggler to be seen. "Good! They are all right," thought Bob. "They will try to redeem the memory of Chancellorsville."

It was with a reeking horse that he dashed up to Hancock, who was talking with Meade. "My scout!" Hancock exclaimed. "What news, Hunter?"

Bob told what he knew. General Meade's face grew serious. "Hancock, this is serious," he said. "I had no intention of fighting a battle at Gettysburg. I intended to fight it here, but Howard says he has a good position picked out for a battle, and thinks he can hold them until night if the Third Corps comes up as he expects. I wish you would go to Gettysburg and inspect the position. If your report is favorable, I will order up the rest of the troops and they can all be there by morning, except the Sixth Corps. If your report is not favorable order all the troops back here."

Bob secured a fresh horse and accompanied Hancock back. They arrived there just as the two corps flanked on both right and left were ordered to retreat back to Cemetery Ridge by General Howard.

In the retreat the two corps got mixed, the streets were clogged and for a time confusion reigned, and

the Confederates succeeded in taking hundreds of prisoners.

Bob saw the confusion and groaned, "It will be Chancellorsville over again."

He was mistaken. There was no senseless panic. The troops fell back grimly and defiantly, and took their position on Cemetery Ridge. The Third Corps and Twelfth Corps were now near at hand and the battle for the day was over.

Hancock reported to General Meade that the position was favorable, and during the night the rest of the army, with the exception of the Sixth Corps, was brought up.

The next day the battle raged, but we will only note that portion in which Bob had part.

General Sickles with his corps had taken an advanced position, and upon this corps Longstreet hurled his legions. The corps of Sickles was shattered and driven back. Round Top smoked like a volcano. General Hancock saw the danger. "Tell General Hunter to report here with his division quick," he called to Bob.

Away went Bob. On came Longstreet's men carrying everything before them. If they reached a coveted point the left flank of the Union army would be turned.

General Hunter's division was coming on the run, but Longstreet would reach the point before they could. "Oh! for five minutes," groaned Hancock.

Only one small regiment of less than three hundred men were within striking distance, the First Minnesota.

"Charge!" said Hancock to Colonel Colvin. Right

against the Confederate hosts that small regiment flung itself.

Astonished, the Confederates halted. Then there was a roar of battle. It was all over in five minutes, and the few that remained of the regiment came back. The time had been sufficient. General Hunter had gained the position, and the flank was saved.

When the roll of the First Minnesota was called after the battle only forty-nine answered, the rest had fallen.

Next morning, after a charge on the right had been repulsed, the field grew strangely quiet. Lee had decided to make one last grand effort. He would try to break the left center of the Union army. Pickett's division of Longstreet's corps, the pride of the army of Virginia, had not been heavily engaged and it was chosen for the assault. To this division was added Heath's and Pender's divisions — eighteen thousand men.

Lee placed one hundred and fifty cannon in a line nearly a mile long. At a given signal these cannon opened. The air was thick with bursting shells, the ground was swept as with the besom of destruction. Gun carriages were shattered, caissons blown up, and horses piled in heaps.

The Union cannon answered. Three hundred guns shook the earth. For two hours the terrific firing continued, then it suddenly ceased and there burst into view eighteen thousand men in magnificent battle array. Cannon balls tore through the ranks, but they came on steadily.

When they came within musket range a line of fire sprang along the Union line. Men fell as grass

before the scythe, but on they came. At last all but one brigade faltered, and began to fall back. This one brigade kept on. Its leader, with his hat on the point of his sword, cheered them on. They gained the stone wall and after a fierce combat they were over and the mouth of the blazing cannon reached. Here the brave leader fell. That leader was General Clyde Monroe, the betrothed of Agnes Somers.

The Confederates who had cleared the wall were taken prisoners. Hundreds of others who had not gained the wall threw down their arms and surrendered rather than take the terrible run back.

The battle of Gettysburg was over. Lee had staked all on that charge and lost.[1]

[1] The Union loss in the Battle of Gettysburg was 23,049. Of this the First Corps lost over 6,000; the Confederate loss was 20,451.

The entire Union loss in what was known as the Gettysburg campaign which extended from June 8 to August 1 was 32,048. The Confederate loss during the same time was about 25,000.

CHAPTER XXVI

AFTER THE BATTLE

THE Confederates left a gory field in their retreat from that disastrous charge. The wounded and unwounded prisoners numbered thousands.[1]

First, the unwounded prisoners had to be gathered and guarded. Bob was passing a body of several hundred that was being marched to the rear, when he was startled by a protesting voice crying, "I want to see Gineral Hunter. I tell yo' I'm no reb."

"Get along and stop your noise or I'll run my bayonet through you," replied a guard with an oath.

Bob knew the voice and with a few bounds he broke through the guard and had Jim in his arms, "Jim! Jim! Is it really you?" he cried.

Bob then turned to the guards and said, "I will vouch for this fellow. He is no reb but a Union scout."

"That's what I've been telling them," said Jim, "but they wouldn't believe me."

"How in the world did you come to be with the rebs?"

"It was being a reb or being shot," replied Jim. "So I was a reb."

"Let's find my brother and have your story."

[1] The total number of wounded and unwounded Confederate prisoners was 12,614.

General Hunter congratulated Jim heartily on his escape, saying, "So you were in that charge, were you?"

"Never want to be in such a place agin," said Jim with a shiver. "Jiminy! How yo' fellers shot. I expected to be as full of holes as a sieve. Don't see why I'm not."

"You were fortunate to escape. Robert has been disconsolate ever since your disappearance at Winchester. Tonight we must have your story."

"You know how dark it was when we tried to break through that Confederate line, Bob," said Jim that night. "I was right by yo'r side when we charged, but soon I couldn't tell reb from Yank. Then my hoss was shot, and I was taken prisoner with hundreds of others. When I saw I was in for it I threw away my arms, and thought I would play the innocent country boy. Yo' know I was dressed for it.

"In the mornin' when they discovered me among the soldiers they wanted to know who I was, and what I was doing among the Yanks.

"I told them I lived Moorefield way, and was in Winchester when it was attacked, and the Yanks arrested me, said they thought I was a spy and when they left took me with them.

"Well the soldiers said they would have to take me to the colonel. He questioned me hard but I stuck to my story. He said he didn't believe me, believed that I was a renegade Virginian who acted as guide for the enemy, but I was big and husky and he'd give me my choice. I could enlist in the ranks, or be shot right there."

"So you enlisted there and then," laughed Bob.

"I shore did," grinned Jim. "I had no notion to be stood up and shot at like a big turkey. I thought I'd get a chance to desert, but they watched me mighty close. Then came this battle. I was in Pickett's division, General Monroe's brigade. I tell you General Monroe was a good one. I heah he was killed. I'm mighty sorry.

"The boys were solemn when we were forming for the charge but they were full of grit. Heard them say they'd break the Yankee line or die. I never heard such thunder as the cannon made. I thought the world was coming to an end."

"You would have thought that several times if you had been where I was," said Bob. "You only heard the thunder. We took the shells."

"Did you have to lay still and take the shells and not fire back?"

"We certainly did. That is, the infantry did; of course the artillery fired. But go on, Jim."

"After a while the cannon let up and we were ordered forward. I will say them rebs be brave fellers. Not one flinched.

"When your cannon opened, there were great gaps knocked in the line, but they would be closed up and on we would go, the officers shoutin', 'Steady, boys! Steady!'

"When the infantry opened it was orful. The men fell like leaves. When we got close General Monroe put his hat on the point of his sword, and holding it high, shouted, 'Come on, boys!'

"We went with a rush. Now and then I could hear an officer shout, 'Forward! Forward!' and those of us who were left would rush on.

"The stone wall was reached and men stabbed at each other with their bayonets and struck with their guns. I thought it would be a good time to duck so I tumbled down as if I was shot. Just as I tumbled another sojer fell on top of me. I rolled him off and then lay still until it was all over.

"I thought I'd see if Tom Flanders, the feller who had fallen on me, was dead. He was an orfully queer feller. He'd never bunk with anybody, and in camp was always off by himself, but he'd rather fight than eat. Once he said to me, 'They had to force you to be a sojer?'

"'Yes,' I said, 'I had no stomach for fightin' but now I'm here I'm goin' to fight with the best of yo'.'

"'That's right,' he said. 'I wish I could enlist a thousand times.' Then he added fiercely, 'Oh, how I hate the Yanks. They killed one I loved better than any one on earth at Bull Run.'

"'Who was it,' I asked. 'Yo'r father or brother.' But he didn't answer.

"As I was sayin', I thought I'd see if he was dead, and I put my hand on his heart and — and —" Jim stopped.

"And what?" cried Bob.

"Tom was a woman," whispered Jim. "I tell yo' it gave me a start.[1]

"Then they took me prisoner and you came."

"How many Yankee soldiers did you kill, Jim?" asked Bob.

[1] Among the Confederate dead at Gettysburg was found the body of a woman dressed as a private soldier.

"Don't ask me that or I'll hit yo'. Yo' know I never fired my gun."

The victory at Gettysburg sent a thrill through the North. The Army of the Potomac had come into its own at last. They had met the supposed invincible army of Lee and defeated it.

It was not only over the victory at Gettysburg that the North rejoiced that Fourth of July. Vicksburg fell that day, and General Prentiss gained a great victory over the Confederate army in Arkansas.

From the Fourth of July, 1863, the Southern Confederacy was doomed. The oceans of blood shed after that were a needless sacrifice for the South.

As at Antietam, the fruits of the victory at Gettysburg were not gathered. General Meade was severely criticized because he did not follow up his victory and pursue Lee with vigor. It now looks as if this could have been done, but at that time Meade thought differently. As it was, Lee was but little harassed in his retreat and in a few days the two armies were back in their old positions in Virginia.

When Meade's attempts to bring on a conflict failed, both armies went into winter quarters to prepare for the campaign which they knew would come in the spring. A campaign which made the valley of the Shenandoah the theater of a great victory in which Bob and Jim bore a humble part.

Agnes Somers was received by her parents as one risen from the dead. Then there came to her the news of the death of General Monroe. Over his heart was Agnes' last letter. To her his death was a heavy blow. His praise which was on every tongue but augmented her grief. The one thing that comforted

her was where her letter was found. With blinding tears she would murmur, "He believed in me. He trusted me or he would never have carried my letter as he did."

Colonel Kincaid did not learn that Agnes had escaped until after the return of the army to Virginia. At first he could not believe it, but when he did, fear and wrath took possession of him. He believed he had been deceived by Lieutenant Jenkins. The lieutenant was beyond his revenge for he had been killed at Gettysburg. As time passed, and he heard nothing of his name being connected with her disappearance, he began to take courage. "The rose still remains on the bush," he muttered, "and my hand may yet pluck it."